SIR FRANCIS DARRELL.

VOL. IV.

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# SIR FRANCIS DARRELL;

OR

*THE VORTEX:*

**A Novel.**

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BY R. C. DALLAS, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF PERCIVAL, AUBREY, MORLAND,

&c. &c.


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E i rimorsi, e il pentire, e il pianger, nulla
Fia che mi vaglia? ALFIERI.

The gathering number, as it moves along,
Involves a vast involuntary throng;
Who, gently drawn, and struggling less and less,
Roll in her vortex, and her power confess.
POPE.

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*IN FOUR VOLUMES.*

VOL. IV.


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# SIR FRANCIS DARRELL;

OR

# *THE VORTEX.*

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## LETTER LV.

*Sir Francis Darrell to Lord Mariton.*

MY LORD,

RATHER than give occasion to altercation and disturbance at Lord Mount-Vernon's last night, I put your card in my pocket: I here return it, and shall take no farther notice of it. You will now act as you think proper.

I am your humble servant,

F. DARRELL.

May-Fair, Friday.

## LETTER LVI.

*Sir Francis Darrell to Mr. Vernon.*

MY DEAR VERNON,

I SUPPOSE you will be in bed all day. — I have been in bed all night, and am up, and have breakfasted upwards of an hour. You will receive this on opening your eyes, for I have desired Morris to tell your man to give it to you as soon as you ring your bell. I shall be at home all day, and beg you will come to me. What an hour of, I think I may say, bliss did I enjoy at your brother's last night! Your sister is an angel — For the last seven or eight years of my life, my existence gives me some idea of a hell; and, if it is not profane, I would say that the first hour at Lady Mount-Vernon's last

night was comparatively a heaven to me. Her sweet manners, her kindness, her motives, went to my heart. — And then the way in which she put me into the hands of the angel whom you have dared to call my Augusta; who little thought, who little thinks, how completely she absorbed my attention — my whole soul. I outwardly was but commonly attentive to her, though, till I finished the dances with her, I was in mind alive to nothing else. I knew, however, that the eyes of the whole room would be upon us; and I reresolved at the conclusion of those to cease my attentions.

From that moment I seemed to be pursued by a demon in the form of Bramblebear's wife: — I could not escape from her: — she met me at every turn: — I was obliged to go from the house to avoid her. She knows I have no heart for her: — she says she knows it — nay, that if I had my own free I never would wretchedly compound it with that of a married woman. I must fall upon a plan to prevent this persecu-

tion:—I fear that Miss Saville saw something of it last night, and perhaps imputed the folly to me.. Heaven forbid! By-the-bye, Lady Betty was not, by some score, the only one of the Vortex at your brother's last night. How the foolish pretty things swam about! You may say what you will of the pleasant gentleness of the whirl, and of its being no Charybdis; but it is evident to me that it ends in perdition. — A few intoxicated rounds of pleasure, and down they go. — Lady Betty is gone. — I do not think she will ever be seen again at Lady Mount-Vernon's; and the other twenty will drop off one by one. What an immense difference between such ephemeral butterflies and spirits, and beauties like Lady Mount-Vernon's, Mrs. Godfrey's, Miss Saville's! Oh! where have I been all my life! Quit it, Vernon, quit the Vortex entirely, before the current is so strong as to admit of no escape — and beware, beware, I beseech you, of the rock I pointed out to you the other night — perhaps a little too warmly — but you will

forgive it, and ascribe it to the sincere affection I feel for you.

Come to me immediately. — I have got into a scrape with Lord Mariton: I am glad it was not last year, for I fear I should have had no scruple in cutting his throat. Fortunately for him, and for me too, I have come a little to my senses, and I will have no duel. — It is equally foolish and criminal. He was rude last night, but it was not my intention to notice his rudeness. Whether he imputed my indifference to a deficiency of courage, or was instigated by disappointment, he took it into his head to come by my side and, after eyeing me, to say if I did not like his standing between *the young lady* and me, I might have his card. — It was in his hand, and he held it up. I looked at him, and took it without making a syllable of reply. The worst of not fighting a duel is, that it encourages fops and bullies to talk big; — but this is no reason, and there can be *no* reason which should induce

one man to kill another, but self-defence. I want to talk to you on the subject, and I shall expect you this afternoon.

Ever yours,

F. DARRELL.

## LETTER LVII.

*Mr. Vernon to Mr. Godfrey.*

Speenham-Land, Saturday

MY DEAR GODFREY,

I WAS three times in your house to-day before I left town, without being able to catch any of you at home; and I am thus far on my way with Aspell to Bath, where he and I have an engagement for a week or ten days. I am vexed that I was compelled to set out without seeing some of you, to tell you the facts which took place this morning at Arthur's, and which I have no doubt will take a hundred different forms before they reach you, for Darrell will not tell them. We sleep here to-night, and I will make use of our halt to give you the account.

Yesterday before I was out of bed,

I received a note from Darrell, requesting me to come to him. I did not get up till very late; and it was dinner time before I saw him. I know his appearance on Thursday night at Mount-Vernon's created a general surprise; and a thousand enquiries were made and causes ascribed respecting the phenomenon, which had been rendered the more extraordinary by his opening the ball with my sister. Miss Saville's being in the same room and dancing with him roused the recollections of the events in France last year: — and then the familiar manner of Lady Betty, which absolutely drove him out of the house, altogether made him the incessant object of observation and talk, but in general with a pleasing kind of interest. There were, however, a few of our young men who did not well relish his reception, and among those was Lord Mariton. I observed him, smarting under the disappointment he had met with, with a countenance on which I perused jealousy and envy, eyeing Darrell; and I was more than once afraid his passions

would get the better of his prudence; — and it seems in fact that they did, though I knew nothing of it till I heard from Darrell yesterday. I went to May-Fair the moment I was dressed.

"Well," said he, "what think you of Mariton's giving me his card?"

"That he is a fool: — how did you offend him?"

"I cannot conceive how, except it was by peaceably bearing some rudeness he treated me with, in standing between my partner and me. I quitted the field, and was extremely surprised when he came up to me, and said, that if I was not satisfied, I should have his card, which he held up at the same time."

"This is very provoking. — What have you done? or what do you mean to do?"

"I have this morning sent him back his card in a cover containing two lines, telling him that I did not mean to notice it."

"I wish you had allowed me to take it to him: I would have prevented any farther folly."

"No, that would have given him an idea that I was begging my life; — and, though I have resolved to fight no duel, I do not intend to leave him to imagine that I act through fear."

"What's to be done to prevent his talking?"

"There, there lies the secret of duelling. — Cowardice is thought to be the sign of a base nature; and a generous spirit, rather than incur the imputation of it, will die, and die in the act of a crime. In this sense it seems a pardonable weakness, perhaps a noble one, if weakness can be noble. It arises from the desire of being thought well of, an undoubted good motive, if well understood — if the good opinion desired be that of the virtuous and sensible. But I believe that all duels are fought either to gratify passion, or to preserve the opinion of that portion of the world which is considered as the fashionable part of society. In short, a man must cease to be a man of fashion if he refuses to fight a duel. That there are good and sensible men in fashionable society, I

shall not, with my present feelings, take upon me to deny; but they who deserve that character must condemn duelling on principle, however they tolerate it on a supposed necessity. The custom is not kept up on their opinion:—it owes its duration to the testy, the self-sufficient, the jealous, beings with which the Vortex swarms:—and must every man be at the call of those wasps, to kill, or be killed?"

I agreed with Darrell, yet I am so tinctured with the fashionable doctrine of a mode of preserving good manners in society, that I owned I did not think it could in all cases be avoided.

"With respect to society," said he; "I have not had much satisfaction in what I have experienced in it: it would be no privation to me to give it up entirely. With my present mind, I have no doubt that I may find some of the most valuable characters in life to associate with; and what care I for the Vortex?"

I must here inform you that this is a cant word between him and me, to designate the thoughtless and the profli-

gate, forming that part of the fashionable world, who, having no fixt ideas of right and wrong, exist in imitation, and fall unmeaningly into the current of pleasure. I know you will be pleased with this conversation, and therefore I will not curtail it, though my pen itches to come to the conclusion. —

"I am speaking," continued Darrell, "from sentiments which must present themselves to every rational, sober-minded man, let his religious persuasions be what they may:—it is too early for me to argue from religion; but I will say to *you*, that, after an impartial comparison of the two characters, those of jealous honour and yielding meekness, I think the former noble, but the latter loveliness itself; and I have persuaded myself that they are not incompatible in persons of good sense and good hearts. I have more than once alluded to a man, whom I knew in the early part of my life, whose total absence of resentments, whose resignation and forgiveness, heaped, unintended by him, coals of fire on the head of one who had

injured him. I meant to speak more of him to you, but it must be at a less worldly moment:—the remembrance of that man—Oh! Vernon, what has pride to do in this piece of moulded transient clay?"

Darrell was here much affected; and I am confident that in his reflections he touched the string that has vibrated the misery of his life.—

"But a truce to morality," continued he, "and a truce to memory:—I will tell you what I propose to do. It is out of my power to avoid Mariton; if I could, I would;—but, that not being the case, he must be made immediately to know that I do not mean to avoid him. Will you accompany me to-morrow to Arthur's, which he daily frequents, and leave the result to circumstances and to providence?"

"He will insult you."

"I think not; but, if he means it, it is better that it should not be delayed."

Knowing Darrell's command of temper, his presence of mind, and the dignity with which he can deliver his sen-

timents, I had a hope that Mariton would be swayed by the firmness he would find in him. I consented, though I was to have left town in the morning, and we spent the evening together. This is the reason we contented ourselves with sending to enquire for the ladies after the ball: — we should otherwise have come in person.

He took me up at one o'clock, and we drove to St. James's street: — we made no enquiry for Lord Mariton in going into the house; but we were soon convinced of his having been there by finding Darrell's note open on the large table. It being early, there were but few gentlemen in the room: — there were two officers to whom Darrell's person was known, though they were not acquainted with him; two gentlemen sat in an another part of the room; and there was a young man of the name of Ajax, whom I had sometimes seen with Mariton; he gave me a nod of recognition and looked at Darrell, with whose person he was not at all acquainted.

"So," said he, "the renowned Sir Francis Darrell is not fond of fighting?"

I saw it was all over, and now thought it impossible that Darrell could do otherwise than meet Lord Mariton.

"Why do you say so, Sir?" said I.

"There it is," replied he, "under his own hand."

Darrell took up the note, and, having cast his eye upon it, put it into his pocket. The youth, surveying him from head to foot, observed that that note belonged to Lord Mariton, who had left it upon the table. Darrell, without making an immediate reply, took a chair near the table where the officers were sitting, and on which was a small dress-sword belonging to one of them. After a short pause, finding the eyes of the remarker still upon him,

"I rather think, Sir," said he; "that this note belongs to Sir Francis Darrell."

"It is directed to Lord Mariton."

"It was written by Sir Francis."

"You know the contents of it?"

"Perfectly."

"In leaving it here, it was Lord Mariton's intention to expose the writer of it."

"For what?"

"For cowardice."

"Sir Francis Darrell is not a coward; but may I ask with whom I have the honour of conversing?"

"My name, Sir, is Ajax; and yours?"

"Is Francis Darrell."

Mr. Ajax was a little surprised, but, giving more credit to the written note than to the oral assertion, he foolishly said:

"Oh! I don't wonder now that you have pocketed the note;" and he winked knowingly towards the officers, to whom the business was now become interesting: the other two gentlemen also gave their attention.

"I could retort that speech with acrimony," said Darrell, "but that would not prove my courage; and I own I wish to avoid a duel."

"I know you do."

"Do you also know upon what grounds?"

"The usual one, I suppose."

"Mr. Ajax," said Darrell, "you have now gone far enough: you had better stop. You see what pains I take to avoid a quarrel.—You have insulted me, but you may go"—

"Sir!" said Ajax, with a tremendous voice and a frown.

"Still you may go," said Darrell, with the greatest composure.

"Sir, I shall expect," roared Ajax.

"Stop a moment, Mr. Ajax, and I will endeavour to convince you that you are wrong in imputing cowardice to a man who does not like fighting." This remark, and the firmness of Darrell's tone, evidently had some effect on Ajax's nerves.

"I don't see," said he, "what one has to do with a man who won't defend himself."

"There you come to the point," said Darrell: "I *will* defend myself." Ajax retreated three steps;—the officers smiled.—"And what's more, I will chastise insult if I cannot manage to

bear it. There is no want of swords and horse-whips even in this room."

As he said this, he looked at the sword on the table, which the owner with a little rattan pushed forward. It was evident that Mr. Ajax's conduct had made him no friends in the company present. One of the other gentlemen, who had been riding, tossed his whip upon the large table. By this time Mr. Ajax had receded half-way to the door of the coffee-room.

"Well!" cried he, "it is Mariton's business, not mine: if he chooses to let you keep the note, with all my heart,"—and out he walked.—There was a general laugh.

"Gentlemen," said Darrell, "I am very awkwardly situated, and I fear I shall have to entertain you unpleasantly still longer."

"*He*, I think," said one of the officers, "will molest you no more; but Lord Mariton has fought, and, above all things, piques himself upon his adroitness at the sword."

"I am sorry for it," said Darrell:

"here is my friend, Mr. Vernon; here are you, gentlemen, lately returned from lavishing your blood and exposing your lives; and every coxcomb assumes a right, if he does not like your face, to call upon you to fight him. — It is absurd."

The officers gently shrugged their shoulders, as much as to say "What's to be done?"

"I am not conscious of having given cause of offençe to Lord Mariton: — he put his card into my hand at a ball, and I returned it to him, as you have seen by my note. I have lately made it a principle, not to be engaged in a premeditated duel; but I will convince Lord Mariton and such men, that it is not from want of courage. If he is determined to kill me or be killed himself, one of the alternatives will probably take place; but, if I have the misfortune to put him to death, it will not be voluntarily — it will be in defence of my own life."

Several gentlemen now came in, one or two of whom knew Darrell, and shook hands with him. Soon after came Lord

Mariton with Mr. Ajax, who, it was clear, had been giving him an account of what had passed, for he brought a sword with him. He came bustling in.

"Where's my note?" said he, "I'll have it." Anger and an assumed contempt appeared in his face, as he looked at Darrell.

"May I, Sir," said Darrell in a whisper to the officer, "beg the favour of being allowed to hold this in my hand a little while."

"By all means, Sir," replied the officer, pushing his sword forward. — Darrell took it into his hand — nobody seemed disposed to interfere.

"Where is my note, Sir?" repeated Mariton, addressing him.

"Do not be too hasty, my Lord — why do you seek my life?"

"I don't want your life, Sir; I want my note, and I will have it."

"I am very sorry for it: I cannot give it you, for I consider it as mine; but I will put it in your reach, and you may take it."

He took the note out of his pocket,

and, drawing the sword he had in his hand, placed the paper on it, drawn up to the hilt. His antagonist's sword was instantly unsheathed.

"Lord Mariton, still think, I beg of you," cried Darrell; — "you hesitate — I beseech you to reflect — it is not too late."

Mariton's resolution was evidently suspended for a few moments, but, seeing every body's eye upon him, he flung his scabbard away, and mustering all his art, he attacked Darrell, who parried his thrusts with the greatest skill, when, suddenly, without having made a single lunge, he caught the hilt of Mariton's sword upon the hilt of his own, and wrenched it out of his hand.

"Bravo, bravo!" resounded from every mouth in the room.

"Lord Mariton," said Darrell, presenting him his sword, "I do not wish to make a triumph of my success: — there is your sword: — I desire no apology for the misrepresentation of my courage."

He is an unfeeling puppy, or he would would have seized the opportunity to

manifest some admiration at least at such noble conduct.

"'Pon my soul," said he, "this is too much," and walked away. His want of feeling was compensated by the feelings of all present; and I am confident that there was not a man there who would not be proud to call Darrell friend.

I cannot conclude without observing that Ajax's character is not a singular one; we have Ajaxes, whose reputation for courage is gained in no better a way than by bullying on the safe side. The indignation of the few who had witnessed his heroism was shown as he followed his friend Mariton out of the room. The name of Ajax was echoed to his ears with an allusion to the less honourable instrument of punishment—but he turned his deaf ear.

When Darrell thanked the officer for his sword, the latter assured him that he should value it particularly for the honour which had been done it. You need not be told, my dear Godfrey, that we returned home highly gratified with the result of the adventure. I could not have slept

if I had not discharged my mind of the feelings it gave me, and which I could not find any of you to share with me. I shall certainly be back in town at the end of next week or beginning of the following, to go to the masquerade. My kind regards to Mr. Saville and the ladies.

Ever faithfully yours,

L. VERNON.

## LETTER LVIII.

*Angelica to Augusta.*

Signa, March.

MY DEAREST AUGUSTA,

WITH what delight do I now take up my pen, as it is to give you so much pleasure. — First, I am coming to you almost directly: — in the next place, we have got fast hold of Mr. Dartford, and without a wife. We have absolutely, as you desired, caged him at Signa; and we never let him go to Florence, or out of the house, without a chain about him. You will readily imagine, my dear Gusta, what heart-felt satisfaction I experience in communicating these tidings to you.

About the time that your letter, and that of my dear Mr. Saville to my father, reached us, Mr. and Mrs. Dorrington arrived at Florence. After you left us

it was always the Marchese's intention to go to England as soon as the affair in law was terminated, not doubting the favourable conclusion of it: but, though favourably terminated, my father's presence is indispensable for some time longer, and he would probably have kept me to accompany him and my mother in the autumn, had it not been for these letters, and the acquaintance we have formed with Mr. and Mrs. Dorrington, and their daughter, a very fine girl indeed, about sixteen. The opportunity being most favourable, the Marchese's desire to comply with your father's wish has prevailed; and I am now preparing every thing for my journey.

The Dorringtons propose to coast it and go to Nice, and thence through France to Paris, where they hope to be before the end of this month. After a short stay at Paris they will proceed to England; their intention being to reach home early in April. Whatever letters you may have written I trust will arrive before our departure; but, if not, they will meet me in Paris, whither they will

be immediately sent by the post: there I shall also expect a letter from you direct, acknowledging the receipt of this, and giving me farther details of the interesting characters and circumstances with which your letters have made me acquainted; — but you must not now expect me to notice at length all that strikes me in your dear letters, because, while I stay, I have much to do, and many visits to make; and on the journey it will be still less in my power; — but I shall think more and more of you as I approach nearer to you; and when we meet I will impart to you all my thoughts and all my feelings. Oh! what happiness is in store for us! I already know Grove-Park, Manor-House, the Priory, Mount-Vernon. — Talk of me to the dear inhabitants.

Mrs. Dartford, dear lady, will be happy to hear that her son is to travel with us. Mr. Dorrington is quite pleased with him, and is delighted with the thoughts of his company; and if he should fall in love with Miss Dorrington there will be no harm, and perhaps no objection on

either side, I mean with their parents, but one: — that would be a great one with Mrs. Dartford: — she is a Protestant. — In all other respects it would be an excellent match: — she is handsome, and the only child of a gentleman of large fortune; and he is really a very fine young man. But you may assure Mrs. Dartford, with my love, that I will not let the chain go till I place it in her hands. I have a long story to tell you of Mademoiselle Cornelie and Signorina Clementina, of their pulling caps, as *we* say *in English*, and of the narrow escape of their lover; but I must reserve it till we meet. We laugh at him, and I think our laughing has had a good effect. He wants to talk again to me about love, but I laugh and keep him in order. He has *solemnly* promised to let me keep his heart till I get him to England: — he is anxious to extend the promise to life, but I would take it for no longer a time than till I could make it over to his mother.

I am writing in haste, for my mother and aunt are waiting for me to go with

them to the Contessa d'Olivastro's. The Count has been gone some time to Vienna, and I suspect is now on his way to England. I wish it were possible for me to be there before him. He shall not molest you: — at least, I will help you to ward off his barbarous perseverance, and to bear the vexation. I will help you, too, my dearest sister, in supporting or in conquering that attachment which is so natural, but also so necessary to be restrained. Adio! Gusta. Write to Paris on receiving this, to the care of Messrs. Penevaux. The Marchese has replied to your father's letter: — he and my mother will follow me in the summer or autumn of this year, and you must come back with us.

Your most affectionate sister,

ANGELICA.

P. S. I have this day received two letters from you written in London. — How fortunate for me that they came together: — the anonymous note which you enclose would have diminished the

pleasure I feel in preparing to come to you; but your next letter restored me at once. I have no doubt about the author of the note. Your subsequent conversation with your cousin deserves consideration. I will write again, either here or on the journey.

## LETTER LIX.

*Augusta to Angelica.*

Hanover-Square, March.

A THOUSAND, thousand thanks to my dear Marchese—but you will not be able to give them; you will be much nearer to me when you receive this. I will write to your dear mother myself.—Oh! how my heart throbbed when I read your dear letter! It has given me more joy than I can express; more hope, more dependence on the future than I have had for some time. I had many fears about myself, the state of my heart, my resolution. The prospect of your being soon with me has cleared away clouds that seemed gathering over me. I shall be strengthened to meet the difficulties in my way by the assistance of my dearest Angelica.

Yes, difficulties, my dear sister — difficulties arising where I least expected them, in the hearts of my beloved father and cousins. Do not, you cannot, suppose them unkind: — it is in their excess of kindness I find difficulties; it is how I shall withstand their wishes. ' Heaven bless them, they seem to me to have lost their reason on one point: — they have all lost their hearts to your friend's preserver, which blinds them to facts, and makes them see what has not happened. — A new and strong occurrence convinces me of there being some grounds for the report respecting him and Lady Betty Bramblebear, which they treat as unimportant and discountenanced by him: — here they shut their eyes. But they open them to see that he has lost his heart to me, though it is evident he takes pains to show the contrary; nay, has even declared it to George in the letter enclosing that to me; for what else can he mean by saying, and *that* too where I did not see much occasion for the remark, — " That he could never

have any other pretension to me than that of a friend." Indeed, though kind, his whole conduct is calculated to show that his regard for me is completely within the limits of friendship. If I had time I could tell you a hundred instances which prove this; and yet I see my dear friends in a manner setting their hearts on effecting an union between us. If there is any unkindness, it is that they do not sufficiently consider the tenets by which I hold myself bound beyond this life; — for, though Sir Francis has made a great, a delightful, advance in his knowledge of truth, he is by no means, and I think never will be, persuaded that our faith is the only well-founded one on earth. And can I, my dear Angelica, suffer myself even to think of uniting myself to one with whom I must so essentially differ? My friends know this objection, but I am sorry to find that they do not give it that importance which it has with me; — and their wishes go so far as to anticipate a declaration, for which they are anxious to prepare me to gratify them. Though

I am sure that that declaration will never be made, I cannot dissemble my objection to it; for the arguments of my dear friends tend to persuade me that there is nothing wrong in such a union; that it often takes place and proves happy. I find myself unable to argue with them, and I insist principally on the necessity of a wife being able and bound to submit her opinions, or at least endeavour to make her sentiments accord with her husband's. In this state I cannot but hope, as I believe, that the declaration they look for will not take place.

While I thus lay my mind open to you, my dear sister, I am far from intending to give you any idea that the interest I take in Sir Francis at all diminishes: it encreases: the very circumstance that has again wakened my suspicion of his imperfect nature serves but to encrease my anxiety, that he should in every act be the great character his genius and his perseverance show him to be equal to: — I will not detail it.. I shall be obliged to write to you by snatches, we

are now so much engaged; but a few lines will make you know enough of it. It should, however, be preceded by the account of a very different occurrence. I know not how it is, but the one I allude to is later, and has so run in my head that I lose sight of other things. I will therefore be regular, though I must be brief.

My last gave you an account of the ball at Lady Mount-Vernon's. — When I wrote, I little imagined what was to be the consequence of my dancing with Sir Francis Darrell. That hasty, weak being, Lord Mariton, thought proper not only to insult, but to challenge, him. Will you believe it in these days, that Sir Francis had the resolution, and the good sense to refuse fighting a duel? He firmly and independently declared that he never would: — the consequence was fresh insults, carried to such a pitch, that Lord Mariton, priding himself on his courage and skill, attacked him in a public coffee-room. How I shudder even now to think of his danger! But Sir Francis proved the better swords-

man, and to the satisfaction of those who were by disarmed him. Mr. Vernon has given a delightful account of the different conduct of the men; and as I cannot do it justice, I shall send you a copy of his letter to George: — read it before you proceed with this.

What a pity it is that such a noble spirit should have weaknesses which involve its possessor in crimes! — Oh! *that* Lady Betty haunts me so! — A few days after the rencontre with Lord Mariton, Sir Francis called; and he appeared to me exalted by the conduct he had pursued: — the family are more and more charmed with him, and not only the family — every body is courting his acquaintance. Several of George's friends have requested an introduction. For this purpose he wished him to dine with us to-day; and in order to secure his acceptance of the invitation he determined to give it himself. As we were going out in the morning, the day before yesterday, he asked us to carry him to Sir Francis's door in May-Fair: — when we set him down, he said he should be

but a few minutes, and that if we would drive up the street and back again he would by that time rejoin us. In returning, the coachman drove slowly and stopped a few doors short on the opposite side of the street. There was a hackney-coach standing at a little distance from Sir Francis's house. His door opening, our coachman made a move as if intending to draw up, and our attention was attracted in expectation of George. — Guess our surprise on seeing a fine fair boy, fantastically dressed, running out. He had on a scarlet hussar-jacket and pantaloons, trimmed in front, in much the same manner, with silver buttons and twisted silver lace, with which the narrow slit cuffs of his jacket were also embroidered. He had light hair curling round his face, under a feathered fancy-hat. "Look, Caroline," cried I — "What an odd ——" "Good Heavens!" exclaimed she, "can it be?" — Vain was the attempt to hide the face: — Caroline's exclamation and look awakened a suspicion, and our eyes told us that the

youth was no other than the lady herself. She was alone, and sprang into the hackney-coach, which drove off as she drew up the blinds. We were extremely shocked, and Caroline had not a word to say. In a few minutes George returned, but he had neither seen nor heard of such a being: yet he still tenaciously supported his opinion, that these appearances might all be explained; and he resolved to take an opportunity of speaking of them to Sir Francis himself. Alas! Sir Francis did not mean to give him the opportunity. Though he had accepted the invitation, he sent an excuse the next day, with a letter to George, assuring him that he was under the necessity of immediately leaving town for Belmont, whence he would write to him on the subject of his hasty departure. What can he say, Angelica? Will such a man condescend to use feints? He will not. I would rather he should be quite silent than feign a cause. How my heart bleeds for him.—He knows what is right:—he loves it:—but I fear the truth is, that he has hitherto

been so shackled, that he cannot easily withdraw himself from those, I must say, disgraceful chains of a life without religion. But perhaps he is now acting wisely; and his departure from town may be to avoid this lost woman. I will hope it, and I will pray daily for the success of his virtuous resolutions: — I will not forget to pray too for his farther success in the knowledge of true religion.

I must now put down my pen. I shall fold my letters, and put them by as I write them; and when you are approaching Paris I will dispatch them in time to meet you there. You must introduce the Count de B. and Mr. Dorrington; — and you must know Madame Darcy, and *la famille* Vertot. You will be delighted with the French: they are remarked for liveliness, but you will find them also sensible and affectionate; I mean the ladies: — the men are clever and polite, but they seem to have their heads turned with politics, even more than the English. Their general manners I think very pleasing.

I have this moment seen Mrs. Dartford. I wrote to her instantly on receiving your letter; and she came herself to thank me. You have made her happy. Pray remember me kindly to Mr. Dartford. I think *you*, after all, must be the person to settle him.

Adieu! for the present.

AUGUSTA.

## LETTER LX.

*Mr. Vernon to Sir F. Darrell.*

Bath, March.

MY DEAR DARRELL,

HEY for the Vortex! a debate at Mrs. Clatterfield's card-party—Veramore and Lady Standish assisting.

"Who has seen the papers to-day?"

"I." "I." "I."

"What account of Mrs. Groven Graven's rout?"

"Exquisite!" was answered in a trio —— treble, second, and base; to which the chorus added: "Three hundred fashionables; no moving."

"There was to be a ball at Lady Mount-Vernon's this week."

"Hardly noticed, except for the appearance of Sir Francis Darrell, and the

lady he was said to have run away with."

"Which lady? ha! ha! ha!"

"Oh! not Lady Betty: the French adventure."

"What! the hand-kissing young lady?

"What's her name?"

"Sybilla; — a Greek from one of the Ionian isles."

"She's an Italian; — her name is not Sybilla, but Savilla: — her father was an Englishman, who went abroad in consequence of having fought a duel, and liking Italy remained there, adding an *a* to his name."

"That's it, I believe. Who has seen her?"

"I." "I." "I." "She was at Bath last Christmas. — I saw her twice in the pump-room."

"Handsome?"

"Comme ça."

"Is she to be married to him? — That kissing of the hand was sentimental, or

A laugh.

"It was not quite the thing to be sure, for a modest young lady; — but the situation was altogether romantic."

Will you have any more, my dear Darrell? "No — folly! I wonder you can write such stuff:" — well then, Darrell, owning that it is stuff, I write only to tell you that there is a large group of the Vortex here, among some of whom that little *stuff* conversation certainly passed, and to tell you also, that I have conceived an idea of a pleasant kind of a dance in allusion to the *Vortex*, which I am endeavouring to get up for the Masquerade next week at the Opera-house. I have engaged the assistance of a good dancer of my acquaintance here, a fanciful fellow; and, what with this and some other quirks, we will have sport.

"I wrote an account of Mariton's discomfiture to Godfrey, for I was afraid you would not tell it yourself. I shall not be a day longer here than my engagement. I hope to find you conquering your scruples, and resolved to give way to the genuine feelings of your heart. She is

the loveliest of women, and you may be the happiest of men. Do not be so weak, I beseech you, as to let her Catholicism stand in your way.

Adieu!

Ever most truly yours,

L. VERNON.

## LETTER LXI.

*Sir Francis Darrell to Mr. Vernon.*

May-Fair, March

MY DEAR VERNON,

YOUR letter would be enough to stop the progress of my charitable improvement towards mankind, and to make me again mark them with all the detestation of my former feelings, had I not learned to distinguish between the mass and the dregs of the human species. I am glad of one thing — the spirit with which your letter is written. I see that your good sense is turning that into ridicule, which you have been in the habit of considering as a source of pleasure; and I conclude from it, that I shall have the happiness of finding that the expostula-

tions of my affection for you have had the effect I wish. Young as you are, what a life of real enjoyment may you look forward to. Let me return the advice you give me. Seek for a lovely and virtuous woman, and be the happiest of men. I know a woman that would make you so, but, alas! though out of my reach, I have not virtue enough to wish her yours, or to recommend your endeavouring to gain her. The selfish feeling makes me unhappy. I once did say *if* you were worthy of her; — but I can no longer say it: yet I cannot be so distracted as to imagine, or desire, that she shall pass her life single, that I may not be more wretched than I am.

'I have no scruples, my dear Vernon, but one, and that is insurmountable either by her or by me. As for her mode of worshipping the Deity, it proves her at least endowed with a piety which bespeaks amiable and virtuous affections; and I could trust to her good sense to discover errors which she owns in her letter to me that she has not investigated. *She* does not say *errors*, but only

that she was *led* into the faith she professes. But why talk or think of a slight, surmountable, objection, when there lies in my way a frightful impossibility. Yes, Vernon, impossibility. I have lately more than once attempted to enter upon this subject with you, since you came to town — but you have seen how the very thought of it appalled me. The disclosure of this secret, which has been preying upon my life, upon my soul, for nearly ten years past is an act exceeded in agony only by the real circumstances of it — but

"I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat."

Convinced of the impossibility of my obtaining this lovely woman's hand, and determined on not offering myself to her, I have examined my mind to see how I could bear the idea of her becoming another's. The idea is torture to me —but I have been accustomed to torture; and, though I shall be able to find no antidote, I have imagined a balm. It consists in the resolution I have come to, in respect to the future years of my life. Happi-

ness is out of my reach, but I may recover myself and die well.

You know how impossible I have found it to spend my fortune notwithstanding the various channels through which I disperse it, and that I am overwhelmed with wealth. — Funds upon funds have been accumulating in my name. To the disposal of these, I have a full moral right, not only now, but beyond my life. I have a legal right to dispose of my estates also; but I agree with the Scotch gentleman, who adduced the necessity of laws as a proof of the roguery and baseness of human nature: he is but a sorry reasoner if not a wicked man, who makes use of all the legal means he has to gratify his passions. I do not think that any person has a moral right to dispose of hereditary property beyond his life. As soon as I have made the disclosure of my painful, painful secret, I shall go abroad, and spend the remainder of my youth in distant countries, meaning to return when time shall have had its influence on my passions, and endeavour to spend the evening of life, in true and

tranquil friendship. In contemplation of this resolve, I have made a will. I have left my landed estates to Mr. Edmund Darrell, my second cousin, with whom, (no wonder!) I have had but very little connection, though I know him to be a very gentleman-like, worthy man. I think he has as much right to the succession as I to the possession of them. He is not only the representative of the family; but he has to retrieve the honour of the title which I have sullied, and I have no doubt he will. But in devising the estates to him, I conceive that I have a moral right to burden them in a degree. Had I married, they should still have been his after my life, if I had had no children, but they would have been chargeable with the dower of my wife; I have therefore charged them to that amount, to be paid to Miss Saville, during her life, whether she live single or marry: the whole of my funded property I have left at her entire disposal. The will is written and executed in form.

But there is little balm in this — I

may live fifty years longer. A penful of ink has raised this castle in the air: — another penful may sweep it away. My heart, though much lighter than it was, is still heavy: — it is now heavy with love and a retrospect that cuts off hope. Could SHE be happy — Oh! the inconsistency of the heart! Her happiness with another, I was going to say, would delight me: — alas! it would torture me: — it would do both; but time would diminish the agony and encrease the delight. I will therefore bring up my mind to endure the thought. She cannot be mine, Vernon. If — I cannot write it. Her father's fortune, though good, is involved, and certainly not equal to such a spirit as hers, which, content with little, is unbounded in its graceful charities: — how much better than I would she dispose of the means in my hands. Instead of bequeathing the funds as a legacy, I wish and intend to make them over to her by a deed of gift. Were she married to my friend, I would not hate him. I will never feel that horrid passion. I would entreat him to reside occasionally at Bel-

mont during my life, and to make use of two-thirds of its income in promoting the happiness of a being to whom I owe so much, and whom I love to distraction, but must love in vain. The other third is infinitely more than adequate to the life I purpose to lead; and, when age has fully reduced love to friendship, I would beg for an apartment to live and die in their arms rationally and happy.

This blot — I wish not to conceal it, — is made by a tear: — Oh how my heart swells! — it will break.

Think of what I have written. — I give no advice as to any particular woman: — but such is my resolution, and my balm.

I shall not be in town when you return from Bath. — I set off to-morrow for Belmont. I have been driven abruptly from London, less by the feelings I have been expressing to you, than by a circumstance, which I cannot explain at Godfrey's, and after which it is impossible for me to see them while it is unexplained. Yesterday Godfrey called to make a point of my dining with him to-morrow, which I promised to do. A

madness had seized Lady Betty Bramblebear in the morning, and at the time that Godfrey knocked she was in the library, in the clothes of the boy she fantastically calls her page. She seems to me not to be sensible even of the *Spartan virtue*. I don't know how she escaped the suspicion of the servants: — I think she did not. — I had given her a very serious lecture, and was urging her to go, when we heard Godfrey's rap. She had just time to avoid him, by going through the opposite door. I have no doubt that Morris knew her, from his thinking it necessary to say to me that Mrs. Godfrey and Miss Saville were in Godfrey's carriage, and saw that lad go out of the house. They must have known her. Let me know on your return to town. — You shall hear from me soon on a much more serious subject: mean while write to me.

Ever yours,

F. Darrell.

## LETTER LXII.

*Mr. Vernon to Sir Francis Darrell.*

London. March.

MY DEAR DARRELL,

I NEVER was more affected in my life than on perusing your last letter. Good God! how you cast away happiness! I beseech you to make use of your reason, and of your religion too, to recall you to a just sense of your situation in life, and to a resolution very different from that which you have taken. "Impossibility!" There is nothing on earth you can tell, or even imagine, that will convince me of such an impossibility. I have not pressed you on the painful subject — I would not do it — but I have imagined much more than you can have to communicate; and I maintain, whatever it be, that nothing but a morbid sensibility can actuate such feelings and reso-

lutions. 'That there is very serious cause for your sorrow I am convinced; but I cannot help thinking that its importance is magnified a hundred-fold, by the knowledge of it being confined to your own breast: the best advice, therefore, which I can give, is at once to unburden your mind—I am willing to sustain the weight with you; or, as it seems to be of a nature which peculiarly interferes with your affection for Miss Saville, what think you of revealing your difficulty in a letter to her? Make use of me in any way, but do not longer delay opening your heart, whatever exertion it costs you:—It is less intolerable, it is less dangerous to the mind than concealment, that worm in the bud.

Your *will*, and your sentiments upon it, and the disposal of your fortune in your life-time, do not in the least surprise me. I know you so well, that I can readily imagine that the comfort of your life would be comparatively ensured by such a step—but I trust that these ideas will all prove but the effervescence of melancholy thoughts, for which a lovely

physician shall find the antidote. The manner in which you think of me, and allude to me, binds me to you if possible more than ever; but think not, Darrell, that I would place myself in such a situation for ten times your fortune. Your Augusta, yes, I will repeat it, has no heart for me; and, between us, I will also repeat, that she has no heart for any man on earth but you; and you are bound to overcome your *impossibility*, be it what it may.

Do not be uneasy about the circumstance relative to Lady Betty:—I have completely removed the pain it had given to your friends in Hanover-Square, by showing that part of your letter to Godfrey. She was recognised by Mrs. Godfrey.—If my information is good she will not molest you again. It was her final effort upon your heart, and, finding it shut against her, she has chosen a more gallant *cortejo*, in the person of Signor Rivers.

Your letter, my dear Darrell, has almost unfitted me for the masquerade; but I will do what I generally do when I

can — *hope*. There is a most excellent understanding between that pleasing passion and my nerves: — these help to foster hope; and in return, hope fortifies them. I certainly have a most buoyant set of nerves. I would to heaven yours were as serviceable to you. If the masquerade produces any thing, which I think will enliven a half hour for you, I will let you have it. I think it will; for I picked up Rufus at Bath, where I found him transfusing sanctity and love, — downright terrestrial love. Of all affectation, that of religion is the most detestable, because of all subjects it is that which demands the greatest sincerity. I am, it must be confessed, far in arrear; but I would rather continue an ignorant sinner all my life, than make religion the medium of sin. Rufus, I fear, has some notion of a necessity for cause preceding effect, for sinning preceding forgiveness; which doctrine I hear he has been preaching with some success at Bath, where he has also ruined the virtuous principles of one or two young men who had been only brought

up with the common ideas of right and wrong. I have no compunction in getting a laugh out of such a hypocrite; and I intend to raise one, if I can, at the masquerade, for which I have brought him purposely to London, after he had preached against the wickedness of it, before me, for half an hour to the pretty little wife of an Evangelical attorney, who had come to Bath, a martyr to the gout. I wish you were in spirits, and with me.

There is a young Italian nobleman, one of Mr. Saville's friends, just arrived. I think you have heard him mention him. His name is Olivastro. — Saville has made him over to me, requesting I would show him the town. Adieu! for the present. You shall hear from me again in a few days.

"Ever yours,

L. VERNON.

# LETTER LXIII.

*Mr. Vernon to Sir Francis Darrell.*

Piccadilly, March.

I DO not wonder that our preachers and monitors set their faces and their pens against masquerades. Who is it that says, a masquerade gives confidence to the timorous, and kindles ardour in the cold; eludes the vigilance of jealousy, and removes the restraint of bashfulness; demolishes the outworks of chastity, and breaks the silence of virgin modesty? Though I enjoyed it much last night, I must, after all, say it is a silly entertainment as to the generality of the masks that make the crowd, and, when we deduct the views of the Vortex, insipid. There was an immense number of masks of all kinds of dimensions, distortions, and dresses, from all countries real and

imaginary; — fairies, genii, devils, as well as Circassians, Turkish sultanas, and Algerines. The good company, that go merely to look at this folly, must surely be soon tired of it. They talk of wit; but do we often meet with it at a masquerade? There is but one way of giving relish to it; and that is to prepare your amusement before hand, and to get acquainted with the disguises of your acquaintance. If I can strike out a few ridiculous scenes, I enjoy it; otherwise I would rather speak to a pretty woman's face than talk to a mask which may hide ugliness.

I have generally managed to have sport at a masquerade; and last night I had two or three good scenes. An extraordinary humour took one of the masks, disguised as a monk, to attach himself to our party almost the whole of the night. I am confident it was a person who knows us very well; but I cannot account for the singularity of the unvaried object of his amusement. When he quitted me, he assailed Mrs. Godfrey, and MissSaville, — always with the greatest humility. From

them he returned to me. I think he knew us all, except Miss Saville; yet he seemed the most attracted by her, and, not knowing her to be a Catholic, his pretended aim was to make her his proselyte. He told me in mock confidence, that he had a special commission from the Pope to convert the whole of the united kingdom, and that he had very nearly succeeded in his object, for which he was to be rewarded with a hat.

" Have you found it difficult?" said I.

" I find more difficulty with the ladies than with the gentlemen," replied he.

" How comes that? I should have thought the reverse."

" It's a sign you are not well acquainted with the English character," said he: " Very few of the women, comparatively speaking, want absolution: — all the men do. Think, my good Sir, what an advantage this is. You would only have to come to me to-morrow morning, to repair all the breaches of to-night — think of that."

"You are the most eloquent of monks," said I, "and now pray tell me where you live, that I may come to you in the morning."

"That's a secret," replied he: "nobody knows where I live; — I am a high character incog. — I'll come to you: — where do you live?"

"Do you," said I, "know such a place as Cold-Bath-fields?"

"I shall find my way," replied he.

"You will see a large building within walls, something like a monastery; knock there and ask for one Mr. Aris; and tell him to keep you there till I come."

"By your looks," said he, "I shan't have long to wait for you." — "Do you know," continued he, "that young lady I have been talking to?"

"Yes, I know something of her."

"Can't you manage to bring her along with you? She is the most obstinate heretic I ever met with."

I could not help laughing.

"Why do you laugh?" said he.

"To think that you should find so

much more difficulty with an inexperienced girl than with an old sinner like me."

"That's precisely the reason: — she is inexperienced and does not know what is good for her; but you do."

"How do you manage to convert such obstinate girls?"

"Why, I never should, without the assistance of such pure converts as you."

"That's not bad," cried I; "which you know is the genteel come-off, when wit stops for want of an answer."

"Mind then that you are good, and bring the damsel with you to Cold-Bath-fields."

"How shall I induce her to come?"

"Why, you experienced sinner! not know how to induce a damsel! Tell her we reverence marriage more than you English people do."

"Call you that a good inducement? Shall I say that, once married, there's no divorce?"

"That's a doubtful argument — it must not be advanced but on due consideration."

"Shall I say, she may be a cardinal's lady?"

"Pooh! sinner! Cardinals do not marry — nevertheless, it is an argument not to be rejected without due consideration also: — if you use it you may hint that I am to be a cardinal by-and-bye, that is, when the United Kingdom begins again to pay Peter-Pence, which can be at no great distance of time; for as soon as the Catholics are called to parliament — you understand me."

"I do: — You cardinals will all have English ladies."

"Mum!" said he, putting his finger to the immense nose of his ruddy mask, on which grew two large pimples — "Mum!"

And he went off to beset Miss Saville again.

Having prepared myself with different dresses so as to be recognised at times by Rufus and some others, and to be completely disguised when I pleased, I put my machinery into play, and brought forward my dance, in which Rufus took a part. It was conducted in a fine style by Harry Lumley, my young acquaintance

at Bath, whom I mentioned to you in my letter from thence. The idea was to represent a picture of the Vortex in emblematical action.—Lumley, as leader, took the usual garb of folly, a Joseph's coat, the cap and bells, with folly's sceptre, an image of itself, *la marotte*, in his hand. He led the way, followed by a line of male and female masks dancing to light airy music. Making room he took his position in the middle—his company arranging themselves in a large circle at a distance round him. He then beckoned them with his marotte, when a bustling scramble for partners took place, and waltzers were seen, as they turned themselves, moving in a spiral line nearer and nearer to him, till they came close; continuing then to waltz on the same spot till there was a press at the centre, when the dancers appearing confused, he shook his marotte at them, and made his way through the crowd. Another scramble ensued for partners; and the men all took different women, and began a new spiral waltzing round Folly, the centre of attraction. The

men were all dandies, and their partners all nudes. They swam off very sweetly and lovingly at first, but scuffled and parted as they got towards the engulphing centre. Observe, that this was in conformity with an opinion lately expressed by you; for Harry Lumley was for gracefully sloping the waltzers through the spiral line, so as to begin again on the same spot, which he says could have been done; but I confess the grace of the cross-sloping to the top seemed to me as difficult as returning from the centre to the circumference of the Vortex; and, as I am regenerating under your auspices, I think that the confusion, break up, and taking one another's ladies, marked the analogy better. It was repeated a good many times, and attracted the attention of all the company.

But the scene that diverted me most was the success of a plan I had laid with Harry Lumley, Aspell, Crawley, and Foster for a laugh at Rufus. We dined together. Talking of the pleasure to come, I observed, as if casually, that we met with a dull repetition of the

same kind of characters at all the masquerades.

"This is the very first I have been at," said Rufus; "it will be all new to me."

"The dance we have," said Lumley, "is new."

"Yes," said I, "but it won't last long."

"But it will be new," said Rufus.

"Yes, it will be new," replied I, "but we want something else for the night; who will start some idea; come, Rufus—come Aspell."

"I can't think," said Rufus, "unless we could dress ourselves up like little school-girls, and dance allemands."

"A good thought," cried Lumley; "but it is not new."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Lumley," said Rufus; "it's quite new to me."

"You may improve upon the idea," replied Lumley; "I have never heard of a sucking child at a masquerade."

"Admirable!" cried I. "I'll go in that character, and Palmer shall be my nurse."

"Oh! oh!" roared Rufus, bursting out laughing; "I go to suckle you! Oh! oh!"

"Upon second thoughts," said I, "I can't undertake the character, for I have some engagements in the course of the night, with which it would interfere."

"I'd rather be the child than the nurse," said Rufus.

"Well, so be it," said I, "and Aspell will be the nurse. What say you, Aspell?"

"With all my heart, and I will give Palmer custards and jellies out of a pap-boat."

"It will be very laughable," said I; "you will be the best characters of the night, and will be celebrated next morning in all the newspapers."

"Can't we get a cradle big enough for my dear child?" said Aspell.

"Oh! oh! Mr. Aspell!" exclaimed Rufus, laughing, "a cradle big enough for me!"

"Why not?" said I; "I'll engage to have one ready by twelve o'clock, and we shan't want it before." Rufus

laughed at the thought, and so did we. It was settled, that the matter should be entirely left to the management of Lumley and myself. Accordingly, when we had sufficiently amused ourselves with the Vortex dance, we repaired to our dressing-room, where I had taken care to have every thing ready.

"Lord have mercy on my soul!" exclaimed Rufus, on seeing a cradle six foot five by two and a half. "Who ever could think of making such a thing as that?"

"Oh! it's very easily done," said I.

He examined it, and finding it nothing but a deal frame, with a little pasteboard, which readily took the form that was to be given it, he expressed his amazement at the ingenious simplicity of the contrivance, and vowed he could have done it himself. But he was nevertheless at a loss to know how it was to be carried with him in it.

"Like a sedan," said Aspell, "here are the poles, which will be drawn out when it's in the room; and when there you must only whimper, and sometimes

pretend to cry, but you must not speak. Remember you are a child."

"Nor show my teeth?" said Rufus.

"By no means show your teeth," cried Aspell, "or I won't suckle you."

"What not laugh?"

"Can't you laugh like a child? Besides your mask will hide your teeth."

During this preamble, we put a baby's cap and frock on Rufus, and Aspell dressed himself as a nurse, with a very large false bosom, a high cap, and very high-heeled shoes, so that he was gigantic. Rufus laughed at the figure immoderately, and let us undress him without much notice, till finding himself almost naked, "Why! what the deuce are you at?" cried he, continuing his laugh; on which Aspell, playing the nurse, went and coaxed and hushed him, till we had fairly undressed him for bed; when, without giving him time to consider, he lifted him up like a child, with our assistance, put him into the machine, and, tucking the clothes well about him to preserve decency, the poles were run in, and Rufus hurried away, laughing ready

to kill himself. Having set him down in a convenient spot, the poles were taken away, and Aspell, drawing a stool to the head of the cradle, began hushing and rocking, midst a roar of laughter from the gathering crowd—"Lullaby! lullaby!"—Rufus, mindful of the character he had to support, spoke not a word, but occasionally whimpered to keep up the farce. Aspell patted and pretended to suckle him, when Rufus, unable to bear the constant rocking, pulled him close, and whispered; "For the Lord's sake, my friend, don't rock any more, I am sick at the stomach."

"Hush! By, baby, by!" said Aspell, and, pretending to sit down, slipped away. Our dresses being altered, we got close to the cradle to observe. Every one passing gave him a *hush* and a *lullaby*; some stood to look. Aspell, having got the secret of his stomach, put his foot on the rocking-step, and gave it a gentle see-saw. After whining and crying like a child, Rufus was unable to restrain a manlier kind of groan, "Oh!" of which

no notice being taken, he bawled out, "Zounds! I shall be sick."

The gentle rocking continuing, and no nurse coming to him, he clapped a hand on each side of the cradle, and, thrusting out his head, first on one side and then on the other, in search of his nurse, he roared, "I tell you, Aspell, by the Lord, I shall be sick."

He looked in vain for Aspell; for, though he saw his foot on the rocker, he knew not to whom the foot belonged.

"You, Sir," said he, "who belong to that foot, I beg that it may take you away."

Aspell removed his foot, upon which I rocked on the opposite side. His head was out there instantly. Heated beyond bearing by his agitation and the crowd, he tore off his mask, and exhibited a perspiring visage.

"I insist, Sir, you take your foot away; this is not your cradle." There was a burst of laughter. "Lord! the child can speak! who would have thought

it?" We gave him a little respite from rocking while he sat up, looking round with his laced cap and frock.

"What a pretty child," says one; "I wonder how old he is. Lord! it has got its teeth; what a shame to be in a cradle! —Let's toss him out!"

Poor Rufus, conscious how unprepared he was for such a toss, cried out, "Now, you would not do such a thing, would you? Fie for shame! Sir, this is Mr. Vernon's cradle. We are in joke; take care, Sir, take care you don't toss the cradle over."

"By no means," said the mask; "I did not know Mr. Vernon had such a fine child."

"Puff and nonsense," cried Rufus; "go about your business." He now began to be very impatient. Seeing me looking on, he beckoned me with his finger.

"My worthy Sir," said he, in a low voice, "do you know Mr. Vernon?"

"Intimately."

"It makes me extremely happy to hear you say so. I am his particular

friend. Do me the favour to go and bring him here."

"I will," said I, in a feigned voice; "but will you first satisfy my curiosity? Did your papa come over to this country with Captain Gulliver? Are all children in your country as big as you when born? And are ye all born with teeth?"

"None of your tricks upon travellers," quoth Rufus, "I know all that nonsense is fair at a masquerade; but will you be kind enough now to go and fetch your friend Vernon here."

"I never saw such a child in all my life. Why nurse, you should whip this child."

"Oh dear me! dear me!" cried Aspell, now returned as the nurse, "since I have been away, some fairy has changed my boy. La! what a different nose!"

"I say, I say, Aspell," said Rufus, in a gentle voice, "come here, I want to speak to you."

"Thee art not *my* child. I'll not come near thee. Oh! what a pretty babe was mine."

Do, my dear Sir," said Rufus to a

stander-by, "pull that big woman close to me."

"What, an't you done sucking yet?" said the mask; "for shame!"

"Let me but catch hold of her," said Rufus, "and you shall see. I'll give her leave to get out of my clutches again, if she can."

"Oh! what a naughty child! fie! fie! Go to sleep." Some one rocked the cradle.

"No more of that," roared he. "I say, Aspell, do tell me where Vernon is gone; I am sure he would not have left me so long if he knew all,—some unavoidable assignation I am sure; but I say, my dear Aspell, I want to tell you something, I do indeed."

Here his eye caught the goddess Diana coming towards the cradle. This female divinity was no other than the muscular Miss Belcher.

"Hah!" continued he, "here is a friend; this must be Vernon's cousin. I say, Lady Diana!" The mask went up to the cradle.

"My dear, good Lady Barbara," said he. —

"I don't know you," said the mask. —

"Not know me! I shall never forget your salve, and great kindness. You know Mr. Palmer, Mr. Rufus Palmer, don't you? Down with you last Christmas. This is all play. Pray bring your cousin to me."

"Where are my nymphs?" said Diana. "Bring me a rod, a birch rod; — this is not the first little boy I have chastised."

"Lord have mercy on me! You may go about your business, Mrs. Diana."

"He is not so ugly neither," cried Diana. "Come, I won't whip it this time! kiss and make friends. Coo, doo."

"Go, go, — get along with you, you Jezebel!" roared Rufus.

"Get along!" said Diana, "you dirty, puny, little thing; get along? eh! Take that." As she spoke, the goddess gave him a slap upon the cheek, that echoed at a considerable distance.

"You, he-woman" bawled he: "catch

me again at a place where they dress up Mendozas and Belchers for female goddesses! Catch me at a masquerade again."

The twinging of the slap was still operating on his choler, when a smart boy ran up, saying, "Which is Mr. Palmer, pray?"

"D— Mr. Palmer," said Lumley; "I know no more of Mr. Palmer than that child in the cradle there. Little one, is your name Palmer?"

"You be cursed," cried Rufus.

"I have a letter for him," said the boy.

Rufus, between the shame of being recognised in his distress, and desire to have the letter, called to him, "I say, my lad, come here;" the boy went forward. "Is the letter from Mr. Vernon?"

"No, Master," replied the boy; "it's from a lady."

"Give it me directly," cried Rufus.

"No, no, Master," said the boy; "you'll tear it to bits. Where's your nurse?"

"Stuff! I know Mr. Palmer, and I'll take care he shall have it." Here he snatched it out of the no-unwilling hand of the boy, and opened it.

"Look, look!" cried a mask, "that child can read already."

Rufus, intent upon the ideas which the note excited, paid no attention to this remark. It was written by Lumley, in a female hand; the words were:

> "Where is Palmer? Where is he?
> Him my eyes have sought in vain;—
> Let him come to yonder tree,
> And a kiss he there may gain.
>
> SILVIA."

"I have seen this hand-writing before," said Rufus in soliloquy; then, calling the boy, "My lad," said he, "I am Mr. Palmer. I suppose you know this is all play. I have lost Mr. Vernon, and want to get out."

"Shall I help you?" said the boy, making an effort to pull off the bed-clothes.

"Hoh! hoh! hoh!" roared out Rufus, seizing the boy's hands; "Zooks, child! you must not do that:—I'll tell

you what though you may do — By the Lord that's a good thought. I'll give you five shillings, if you will go outside and bring in two chairmen to take the cradle out of this infernal place."

"I will, Sir," replied the young mask, "I really feel for you."

"That's a good lad." The mask moving away, Rufus called after him; "Mind, five shillings — five and sixpence." As he got a little farther, he called him back; "Boy! Lad! I say, hollo! Mrs. Silvia's boy! the men must bring their poles, remember that; here, look, here are places for them."

"Yes, yes," said the mask, looking back, "I'll take care of that;" and went off.

For some minutes the Monk had been at my side, looking on; and, though my dress was changed, he knew me, by what means, Heaven knows, for his Cold-Bath-fields proselyte.

"Sinner!" said he, "you will be true to your appointment?"

"As you to yours," was my reply.

"What a hardened young creature is

that damsel of your acquaintance!" said he. "She has been brought up a heretic from her cradle — even there the seeds of heresy are sown."

"Suppose," said I, "you try your hand to destroy them before they take root in the cradle before you."

"It is the time," said he, "to prepare the soil for receiving the grain." He advanced; Rufus's eye caught the figure of the Monk as he approached.

"The Lord have mercy on my sinful soul!" ejaculated he; "What have we here? By all that's good, a pioneer of the scarlet woman. Avaunt! Beelzebub! avaunt!"

"Benedicite," said the monk in a mild voice; and, moving his hand as if blessing him; "Benedicite, Infans!"

"Infans!" cried Rufus; "Infans, patruelis, et hæres. There, you see, I can talk Latin as well as you. Now go about your business, do, for the very sight of you makes me perspire."

The Monk calmly drew the stool to the side of the cradle, and sat down facing his prey.

"Get up," cried Rufus; "that's my stool — but you may take it away with you to your master, for never more will I sit upon a stool which you have brimstoned all over. — Come, let me see you fly away with it."

"My child," said the Monk coolly, "it would be as easy for me to fly away with the cradle and you in it."

"Lord! Lord!" exclaimed Rufus; "Heaven protect me! You, Sir! I know all this is fun; but pray go along; I hate the devil even in fun."

"You don't know me, my dear child."

"Yes, I do; and I'll be cursed if you shall make me any child of yours. — You are one of Babylon's pioneers; a prime one too; — you smell of brimstone — go along — you shan't open your mine upon *me*. I say, Beelzebub, if you will go away, I will tell you a secret that will please you."

"I know it already," said the Monk.

"There," cried Rufus, "didn't I know you were the devil? Come, now, let's hear; what is it?"

"That you have received a billet-doux."

"You are a cunning devil, that's the truth; but how is that to please you? Come."

"Not as a devil, which I am not, but as a friend."

Rufus looked him full in the face, and made mouths at him.

"As a friend," continued the Monk mildly; "and you will say so if you will listen. I never in my life heard a child of your age talk so much."

"Truly, Mr. Pioneer, nor at all, I take it; but none of your friendship for me — so go, go."

"Not if it concerns that billet-doux?"

"Eh!" cried Rufus.

"I know the mistress of the boy that brought it."

"Are you sure? Come, I see the devil may be good for something. Are you sure you know her? What's her name?"

"Oh!" said the Monk, "it would be easy for me to deceive you. But I am above deceit."

Rufus made a mouth at him.

"Deceit is no part of my character."

Rufus again made mouths.

"This is some part of your round-about mining, I suppose; but you shan't blow me up, Mr. Babylon; so you may save yourself the trouble of digging any more."

"You forget Silvia," said the Monk.

"If it is she I suspect," said Rufus, "she is the most beautiful creature you ever saw."

"It is she herself," replied the Monk.

"Can you," cried Rufus, "with all your cunning, tell me how I shall make my way from this cradle to that tree? I'm here in swaddling-clothes."

"Nothing easier," said the Monk; "Ill lend you my frock."

"Your frock! Heaven preserve me! You want to wrap me up, and fly away with me. Your frock! Rufus Palmer in the black frock of the scarlet woman!"

Here the Monk replied in verse:—

"Who is Silvia? What is she
That all our swains commend her?
Lovely, fair, and plump is she;"

"No, not plump," cried Rufus.
The Monk went on:—

"The Heavens such grace did lend her,
That she admired might be."

"I tell you what," said Rufus, "I feel a kind of delight; there is great sweetness in those verses of yours. I see you are a poet, whatever else you are; and if you'll manage to transport me, properly dressed, to the feet of Silvia, I will listen to you."

"That I can do, but will not as long as you think me a devil."

"Lord!" replied Rufus, familiarized to the soft voice and manner of the Monk, "I was only in joke; — it's all fun here, isn't it?"

"Do you," said the Monk, "believe in purgatory?"

"How well you time your questions!" said Rufus; "I must be hard of belief with a vengeance, if I don't believe in that: — why, my worthy black frock!

I have been in purgatory these two hours."

"Will you in future follow my counsel, if I relieve you from it?"

"And take me dressed to Silvia?"

"Well! I'll throw that into the bargain."

"Agreed."

"Agreed. You are no longer afraid of me?"

"Not at all."

"I am no pioneer of Babylon?"

"No, but a friend in need."

"And the scarlet lady you think is —?"

"Now, come, don't press too hard upon me all at once."

"Well, well! we will talk of her another time: — and now see, here come chairmen with Silvia's page."

Rufus rubbed his hands with joy. "Here, my men, here are the cranks for the poles," cried he to two masks in large chairmen's coats with proper straps and poles, which the masks soon fixed, and began to move. A shout followed him.

"Shout away, shout away! I don't care

that for any of you," cried Rufus, snapping his finger and thumb; "I shall soon be away from your nonsense, and catch me at a masquerade again, that's all! You are a good boy," added he, speaking to the mask who had brought the supposed chairmen, "I won't forget the five shillings — was it five and sixpence?"

Turning into another apartment, followed by a crowd, the chairmen, pretending to be overcome by the weight, rested. No sooner was the cradle lodged on the floor than it began rocking. Rufus in vain darted his head from one side to the other to find his tormentors; away he rolled like a light over-masted ship in a heavy swell. He begged Silvia's boy to make the chairmen beat off the mob. This they did to his great relief.

"Master," said one of the chairmen, "this is warm work; I hope your honour will order us a pot."

"There's no porter to be got here, man; you shall have two pots when you get outside of this volcano."

"Thank your honour; Grady's not without his share of conscience; your

honour can't do more than you can do. Come Phelim, take up."

"His honour," said Phelim, "will be kind enough to settle with us here; its the custom, your honour, on crowded nights, to munerate we your honour's servants more than usual."

"Very well, very well, go on."

"Your honour's a stranger to we, and we hopes no offence in demanding the fare and muneration before we carry you any farther."

"The Lord have mercy on me!" sighed Rufus; "I shall never get out. — I'll pay you when you have set me down."

"We haves no doubt of your honour's honour at all," said Phelim; "but o' masquerade nights there be some of you gentlemen that bilk we all for fun. We must beg to be paid, your honour."

"You may beg long enough and be hanged to you; I have not got on my — my — pockets."

"Sure your honour beant at a loss for a friend to lend you ten or twelve shillings."

"Ten or twelve devils," cried Rufus.

"As to that, you may do as you please; but our fare we will have before we stir, and that's five shillings all but sixpence. You can't be any gentleman, or you would not stand for the munera-tion with a couple of poor fellows, carry-ing such a heavy big boy as you."

Rufus, confounded, knew not what to do.

"Shall I go for a police officer?" said Silvia's lad.

"What for? To make a noise here? I have had enough of that; pay them, and have done with them."

"Who, I? Sir! I have no silver about me; shall I go to my lady for some?"

"Are you mad, boy? Not for the world; I have plenty in my purse if I had it here.—Where's Beelzebub? he will lend me a few shillings, to be sure."

The monk had vanished; the chairmen were not to be found. Rufus's patience was now completely exhausted, and, in-deed, I now thought it time to release him, and bustled forward in my first dress, with my mask in my hand.

"Where, where have they carried it?" cried I, in seeming agitation and displeasure.

"Here, here, Vernon, this way, my friend Vernon, my dear friend Vernon," called Rufus —

"What folly is this?" said I; "why have you been playing the fool so long in this silly machine, when I know you are expected elsewhere?"

"My dear friend," replied he, "how could you serve me so?"

"Serve you how?" said I —

"To leave me to the mercy of the merciless, of such a crew!"

"You surely could not think I should stay all night by your side — where's Foster, and Lumley, and Aspell?"

"Don't ask me, don't ask me, don't — that's a good fellow — the thought of them's enough to turn my stomach again."

"Again? why, have you been sick?"

"Sick! — but get me into the dressing-room first, and there I'll tell you all."

"I take it extremely ill of them," said

I, "and I shall tell them so — but without them how am I to get you away."

"Make that young chap find out the chairmen, and settle with them what you please."

"I see one of them," said the boy, and running off, returned with the supposed chairmen, who were personated by Crawley and Foster.

"Come along," said I, "in with your poles and follow me."

"Bless Mr. Vernon's honour," said one of them — "Grady knows Mr. Vernon's honour, and would make nothing of following him all the world over, even beyond the sea-side towards Waterford."

"You have been making too free with the bottle, my friend," said I, "take care how you carry this gentleman."

"Never fear, your honour," said Grady, "we'll no more spill him, nor we would the champagne we have been drinking, for want of porter."

They fixed the poles, and having taken up the cradle, began to reel about as having drunk too much.

"Steady" cried I, walking by the side of Palmer.

"Steady!" echoed he, adding: "by the Lord, Vernon, they are drunk."

They tossed him about unmercifully through the crowd, and we made our exit amidst shouts of applause; at the dressing-room I discharged the pretended chairmen, and as soon as he slipped on a dressing gown he began to recount his misfortunes to me, being persuaded that I would not have left him without an indispensable engagement. When he came to the note he had received from Silvia; "do you think," said he, "that it's real?"

"I have known such confessions at a masquerade," replied I, "but I know nothing of Sylvia." —

"That," said he, "must be her anonymous name: I guess, but I would not tell even you."

"If that's the case," said I, "I should certainly hear her confession; — there's no blushing under masks, you know."

Harry Lumley had engaged a friend of his with whom Rufus was unacquaint-

ed to personate Silvia, and having dressed the lover in a fine yellow satin jacket, I helped him to find his way to the appointed tree, which was a large shrub in a corner of the concert-room. Before I parted with him, I told him it was probable that I should change my disguise, in which case we might make ourselves known to each other by a sign and a bye-word. It was agreed that the word should be *cough*, and the sign a gentle pinch on the arm, which was to be answered by a cough.

Pointing out the tree, and the lady sitting on a bench that could hold two persons, I left him, and in a moment slipped on a domino, which was ready for me. Rufus, approaching the bench, bowed, and bowed, without the slightest return of notice; at length he went up close. I was not near enough to hear his reception, but I saw Silvia inviting him to sit. The bench was on a swivel, and was safe enough to look at, and also when the supported side had a sufficient weight upon it to balance the other side which had no support under it. I saw

Rufus take the seat, and after a few minutes Silvia rose, when the seat turning on its hinge, down dropped the lover roaring as he fell, and Silvia ran off. He was, however, up in a moment and after her, saying:

"I'll know who you are, though." He followed, sometimes running, sometimes creeping, and Lumley's friend kept him full half an hour at bo-beep. Passing several persons whom he suspected to be me, he dealt about his pinch and his cough, and was laughed at, and sometimes assailed and abused. At last Silvia suffered herself to be caught.

"Now, do tell me truly," said he, "are you a woman, or not?"

A crowd gathering, "Don't be rude, Sir," cried Silvia, in an affected voice; — "I won't be followed in this manner. You have already cost me more tears than you are worth."

"Upon my soul!" — said Rufus.

"A pretty fellow," cried one of the crowd "to make a woman cry." —

"Upon my soul!" repeated Rufus.

"Soul and body both, gentlemen," said

Silvia, weeping, — "he is a betrayer, a deceiver."

"Shame! shame!" was echoed to his ear: — "he deserves to be ducked."

The idea appalled Rufus, and he addressed the crowd in his defence: — "I give you my word," said he, "I never meant to hurt the lady; — she wrote me a note, which I have not got about me."

"Shame!" cried one, "to boast of receiving letters from ladies."

"Lord have mercy," cried Rufus, "you don't understand me."

"Let's hustle him," says one.

"If you do," says Rufus, holding up his doubled fist, "I'll knock the first man down that touches me."

"Pray do, do," said Silvia, "he deserves it: — I'll begin first." The mask elbowed him, and he was sea-sawed by the crowd.

"Madam!" said he, turning to Silvia, whose mask was now off and disclosed a hard-featured face, with a thick beard, whiskers, and long black eye-brows.

"Madam! by the Lord!" cried he,

struck with the figure, "I was going to call her Jezebel, but she is nothing better than a Holofernes."

"Cruel, cruel Rufus!" whimpered Silvia.

"Cruel Rufus," was chorussed by the by-standers.

"I see how it is," said he, "this is what you call the humours of a masquerade; — catch me at a masquerade again, that's all," — and off he strode; but before he had got ten steps, he heard himself called: — he stopped and looked towards the quarter whence the sound issued, and waited for a repetition of it.

"Rufus!" this came from an opposite direction. He started round, when his name was repeated in a different place, where he immediately directed his eyes, after a little longer waiting.

"Hah! curse ye! it's all a sham; — all a masquerade from first to last:" — and he went on in hopes of finding me, pinching and coughing as he sought his

way out of the house. So much for Rufus.

With the exception of the Monk, who interested me much, I met with nothing that you may not meet with at every masquerade. A large assortment of the Vortex were, as usual, the chief supporters of the evening. They promenaded, waltzed, courted, made assignations, supped and went away.

Lady Standish, very slightly clad, personated a *Psyché*, and that fop Veramore was *en Cupidon*, neither of them ashamed to show their faces. I occasionally detected Lady Betty near the box where Miss Saville sat with the Godfreys; but she was so annoyed by the Monk, that she could hardly get an opportunity to speak to her. Rivers was her principal attendant, and I fancy the next elopement in the Vortex will be graced with their names. Mariton and Ajax were both harlequins, and took pleasure in showing their agility all night, principally in playing leap-frog over each other's heads.

I grew tired at last, and went off about four in the morning. Mrs. Godfrey and her cousin retired before supper. It is an amusement the Godfreys do not frequent, and their going last night was to show their Italian cousin an English masquerade. They sat all night in one of the lower boxes, so that I could speak with them at times.

Soon after they went, I missed my monk, whom I intended to pursue at and after supper, in order to discover him, but he escaped me. He knew me, I am certain, from several equivocal allusions he made use of. One speech he made, particularly struck me. In our last rencontre I said to him,

"Remember absolution is the word."

"Sinner!" said he, "thou shalt be absolved, but it must be upon the usual conditions!"

"Ho, ho!" said I, "there are conditions?"

"Attend," cried he, "I am called away, and shall see thee no more, either here or in Cold-Bath-fields; but I will

leave my counsel with thee: meditate upon it, and profit. Absolution IS the word; — it is the universal doctrine of human nature, and confined to no modes of worship; but nature herself hath established the conditions for obtaining it. If thy crimes sting thee not, there is no hope for thee. If thou hast robbed the orphan, slandered the innocent, deceived thy friend, planted a dagger in the heart of a parent, wilt thou have absolution gratis? If, even in thought, thou hast proposed the seduction of the ignorant maiden, or the virtuous wife, wilt thou have absolution gratis? Thou mayst laugh awhile, but nature's *penance* will overtake thee, perhaps too late — REMORSE: — it is fire in the heart's core, yet sometimes inadequate to guilt — then — no more — beware young man, beware."

As he said this very impressively, he left me; I followed, but could not engage him to stay longer: — he mildly put me away with his hand, in the action of blessing, saying at the same time, "Benedicite!"

Adieu! my dear Darrell: — I hope I have banished the *Blues*, but I am tired myself.

Ever yours,

L. VERNON.

## LETTER LXIV.

*Augusta to Angelica.*

Hanover Square. March.

WHERE is my dear Angelica now? Many hundred miles nearer to her sister, who is travelling with her in imagination and on maps. I have embarked with you, Angelica, at Genoa, and landed at Frejus; I stopped with you a couple of days at Avignon, supposing the very sound of Vaucluse worth at least eight-and-forty hours; and I am at present with you at Lyons. You will soon now be at Paris; and I shall make up my packet to be dispatched immediately, lest you should arrive and not find a letter from me, expressing the joy which yours has given me. I trust that you will be with me in the first week of April. Your arrival is of importance in a point you little think of. There will be a recess of the parliament: George

and Caroline spend it at Woodlee: my father wishes to go and stay at Grove Park. If you are here we will accompany him: if not I shall go with them.

Though we shall be obliged sometimes to part with my cousins, yet we shall be a great deal together, for the distances of our residences are not very great. By leaving Grove Park early, we may dine in town. Woodlee is much nearer still to London. Manor-House is the farthest asunder, but that is little more than a day's journey from town. These thoughts come into my mind from the feeling that brings you nearer to me every day, and I go in imagination with you to every place where you will have a home.

I will now return to the subjects which have so much interested my dear Angelica. — The letter, to which I shall annex this under one cover, contains an account, which has proved so erroneous, that I ought perhaps to destroy it: but, writing, as I do to you, occurrences and sentiments as they arise, I will content myself with removing the impression it might make, rather than not let

you see every thing in my mind as it passes. The pleasure too, my dear Angelica, is great, I own : — I have involuntarily wronged Sir Francis Darrell, and it is a real gratification to do him justice. All the appearances respecting Lady Betty Bramblebear have been cleared up. Mr. Vernon read to George part of a letter from Sir Francis, who had learned from his servants that we had seen her come out of the house. He owned that the shock he felt was the cause of his leaving town, and explained the pains he had taken to convince her of the folly of her conduct. This you may be sure gave us all pleasure; but to complete it, a circumstance occurred which I must tell you as it happened.

I believe I mentioned in one of my former letters, that there was to be a masquerade at the Opera-House, to which I was going with George and Caroline, merely as spectators, for they take no pleasure in it as an entertainment, and it was principally that I might have an opportunity of comparing it with our Italian carnivals. I have something to say to you of this masquerade, but I must

first surprise you with the unravelling of mysteries which gave me so much pain. On the morning after the masquerade, before I left my dressing-room, Madelena told me that a young lady, whose name was Craven, was below, and wished to speak to me alone. Well remembering the name of the winking man and his sister, to whom I was introduced at Lady Mount-Vernon's ball, I made no scruple of admitting Miss Craven, though I could not imagine the cause of her visit at that time of the day. I had seen little of her at the ball; her being chaperoned by Lady Betty kept us at a distance from each other. What notice I did take of her was in her favour. Her dress and demeanour were modest. I remember making in my mind a comparison between her and some other ladies present, to her advantage; and I should have wondered at her coming to the ball under Lady Betty's protection, had the reason not been explained to me. Her father had been a respectable manufacturer at Peterborough, who had made a large fortune, and brought up his family in affluence.—

He was dead, but her brother was still at the head of the manufactory, which continues a thriving concern. For some years there had been an intimacy between the Cravens and Mr. Bramblebear, who had found it convenient to borrow money of the late Mr. Craven. In proportion as the debt augmented, the intimacy encreased; and the young ladies were much at Bramblebear Hall, where they saw something of fashionable life: and this winter Mrs. Craven, who was still alive though advanced in years, consented to let her elder daughter see more of that life in a town view, under the care of Lady Betty. Poor woman! she little knew to whom she was trusting her child.

As Miss Craven entered my room I rose to receive her.—She was in a very elegant morning-dress, and looked very handsome, but serious. Madelena having given her a chair, and left the room, I said I was glad to see her:

"Though I fear," continued I, "from the early hour of your visit, and your asking for me, that you have some unpleasant communication to make."

"I am not much acquainted," replied she, "with the rules of fashionable life in town, but I know you will excuse my mistakes for the sake of my motive. I may be doing wrong, but I do not mean it if it is so, yet something tells me that I have no right to suppose you so interested about any man, as to excuse the liberty of speaking to you on the occasion which has induced me to come here."

As this young lady was living in the house with Lady Betty, this introduction gave me an idea that she was her confidante, and was about to speak of Sir Francis Darrell. I had a momentary hesitation whether I should allow her to go on or not, till she said:

"But as you are yourself concerned, you will, I am sure, not be displeased with me."

"If I am concerned, my dear Miss Craven," said I, "I shall consider myself under an obligation to you for any information which it may be necessary for me to know. Had it concerned others only, I should have requested to remain ignorant of it."

"I beg you," said she, "to believe that I do not mean to attribute to you any thing but friendship, when I tell you I am purposely come to clear from blame the conduct of a gentleman, of whom you cannot but wish to think well."

"Who is it?" said I.

She replied, "Sir Francis Darrell."

I expected the name, but my pride would not allow me to suffer her to imagine that his conduct was of that importance to me which her visit implied. — I said "that my gratitude to Sir Francis would always induce me to wish him well, but that I had no concern in his conduct."

"Except," said she, "as impertinent people will make it so, as you must have seen by the anonymous note you received."

I was not much astonished at hearing this from Miss Craven's mouth — yet it shocked me to find her acquainted with the circumstance, and I prepared to receive her full communication.

"My dear Miss Craven," said I, "I

must observe that your knowledge of such things is not ——"

"Stay, Miss Saville," cried she, interrupting me, "and hear before you blame me: — it is disgraceful to Lady Betty, but not to me: — I am at this moment in a situation you little think of; and I fear that my character will be implicated in her shocking conduct." She here burst into tears.

"Good Heaven!" cried I, surprised, "what is the matter?"

"Lady Betty has not returned since the masquerade last night," replied she.

"Gracious Heaven!" said I, "I do not wonder at your agitation — but compose yourself, I hope you are not implicated."

"Oh! no, no, no," — cried she with encreased agitation; "I have seen too much, but I knew nothing of her intending to act in this manner."

The dear girl could not restrain her tears for some time. I asked if she would allow me to call Mrs. Godfrey.

"Presently," replied she, "but not yet."

I took her hand, and begged her not to

be uneasy as to herself. — As she recovered, I asked if she was at the masquerade.

"No," replied she, "I *was* to have gone, and wished it at first, never having been at one; but Lady Betty's conversations with me, and her manner of acting for ten days or a fortnight past, determined me not to go; — indeed I wrote to my mother, to say that I should return home sooner than was intended. The whole of yesterday and the day before, Lady Betty hardly spoke to me, for adhering to my resolution not to go to the masquerade."

I told her she had acted wisely, and, seeing her composed, I requested she would allow me to introduce her to my cousin.

"I am sure," said I, "she will be happy to show you every attention on this occasion, as well as on your being our neighbour in the country."

She bowed, and I went for Caroline, whom I prepared to see her by informing her of what had passed. She shook hands with her, and, telling her that I had mentioned the circumstances, added, that

there was a room in the house at her service. She made her acknowledgment very warmly, and said she would accept of it for a day or two, by which time her brother would be ready to take her into the country. Having quite recovered herself, she detailed to us a very sad account of her protectress, excusing the information she gave, by observing that she thought it no breach of the rules of hospitality or of confidence, to speak of a person who had so completely betrayed herself. She said she had long thought Lady Betty rather free in her manners, but supposed it was the effect of innocence, as she was so young a woman. She recollected thinking her too familiar last year with Sir Francis Darrell, before he went abroad, but had no idea that she was a guilty woman. After his return from France, she had met him at Brambear Hall, once or twice, at which times Lady Betty appeared more angry than pleased with him. Some notice, too, had been taken by her brother of her attention to Mr. Veramore, but he was wrong in that particular, for she had shewn her

resentment at his impertinence. She and Mr. Bramblebear had always made themselves agreeable to her family, and when they left the country at the end of the autumn, they had engaged Mrs. Craven, to let her come to them in London, after Christmas; that, upon their arrival from Bath, her brother had brought her up to town, and, having staid to go to Lady Mount-Vernon's ball, had returned to Peterborough.

"I was delighted," continued Miss Craven, "with my reception in Seymour-Street, where Mr. Bramblebear had taken a house for four months: nothing could be kinder; and the idea of the enjoyment I imagined in the novelty of London gave me great spirits. I was not long, however, with Lady Betty, before she began to give me marks of her confidence that made me uneasy. It is a painful thing to have folly or vice in trust, yet treachery in itself appeared to me so odious, that I should certainly have kept my opinion of Lady Betty; and the circumstances she confided to me, to myself, had *she* thought proper to keep any measures

with the world; at present, I consider myself as released from every obligation of the kind. She made me her confidante, and would, had I been willing, have made me her associate. The first thing she told me was, that she never would go to live in Yorkshire with Mr. Bramblebear. Her great object for some months past has been to attach Sir Francis Darrell to her. — She failed in this at Bramblebear Hall. She then purposely threw herself in his way at Malvern, and was again disappointed. In town she has written him letters though he did not reply to them. She then was convinced in her own mind, that his conduct was owing to an attachment to you, Miss Saville; and she resolved to injure him in your opinion. The note which you received, signed "*Preserver*," she wrote, and would have had me copy, but I refused, and from that day her regard for me cooled. Lady Mount-Vernon had previously included me in her invitation to her ball, or I imagine I should not have been invited. There you could not but observe her conduct: — she pursued him

to every part of the rooms, and I am persuaded was the cause of his retiring so early."

Here Caroline asked her if it was Lady Betty who pinned the note to my shawl.

"I was not then in her confidence," said Miss Craven, "but there can be no doubt of it. She has lately, by some means, forced Sir Francis to leave town, which, I believe, convinced her that all attempts to attach him would be fruitless, and she has been more successful in attaching a young man of large fortune of the name of Rivers, whom I have met at Bramblebear hall."

Miss Craven's open and simple manner in relating her connection with Lady Betty and the results of it impressed both Caroline and me with feelings in her favour; and we lamented that she should have been so exposed to the seductions of an unprincipled woman, with whom it was very clear that she was not congenial. She had so completely lost her confidence, that she knew nothing of the lady's last manœuvre in her page's fantastical

clothes; and, when it was mentioned to her, she said that she must have taken the clothes out and dressed at another house.

How painful is it, my dear Angelica, to reflect, that there are women, on whose conduct the happiness or misery of their families depends, so lost to every better feeling! Miss Craven having accepted the room Caroline offered her, accompanied us to breakfast, during which my father and George were made acquainted with the cause of her visit. You will believe that they were not much astonished; but I fear they were not very sorry either. They are so fascinated with Sir Francis Darrell, that every thing that tends to establish or to magnify his character delights them. They are not glad that the lady has misconducted herself, but that *she* has done what *he* could not do — exposed her misconduct, as the exposure has so completely removed every ground of suspicion on a subject that for months past had been considered with pain.

Miss Craven's maid was sent for, and

her things brought to Hanover-Square, where she remained but two days, for in consequence of her letter to her mother, before she had the least idea of Lady Betty's eloping so soon, Mr. Craven arrived in town to escort her home. Her modesty and good sense endeared her to us, and my cousins pressed her to stay some time longer; but she said that she could not; and we were sensible that, with her delicate and just sentiments, she could not have gone into company without great pain, nor, indeed, without some loss of that consideration which she had gained in our minds. She carried with her our esteem and good wishes, and a certainty that we should be happy to see her another time. This young lady's disclosure, my dear Angelica, has given me very great pleasure: it has raised Sir Francis to that high place in my esteem which he deserves, and which, with my grateful feelings towards him, it was very painful to me to withhold — but alas! I foresee that it leads to reasonings on a subject respecting which my father and cousins think me unrea-

sonable. They must, however, stay at least till I am addressed upon it, before they can repeat their reasonings and their wishes. That will never be: — he whom it concerns has said it will never be; and I will not agitate myself with making resolutions which may never be called for, but I will repeat to my dear Angelica, that I never can be persuaded to unite myself with one whose opinions and mine on the most important topics of life are at variance.

To counterbalance the pleasing subject I have been dwelling upon, I have to tell you that Count Olivastro is in London. He arrived last week: George has received him with great civility; my father with kindness; and I with a degree of inward horror that I cannot account for. Whatever I felt, however, I had resolution enough to conceal; and I made sincerely the kindest enquiries for all his family individually. I do not think him altered in any thing except that his brows are now constantly contracted. Mr. Vernon, whose attentions to him my father requested, tells us

that he expresses pleasure in seeing London; but rather by words than looks. I hope he will not stay long — yet I fear he means to renew his addresses personally, though my father, in reply to one of his letters, assured him that he could not receive him in England, but upon condition of his relinquishing such a fruitless pursuit. I will see him occasionally, but not always when he calls. At all events you will soon be with me now to assist me in conducting myself properly in this point as well as others. His arrival occasioned a remarkable thing which I must not omit to tell you: — When I mentioned to Madelena that he was in London, she turned pale and nearly fainted away. I thought it very extraordinary, but it might be owing to the suddenness of my manner in speaking of it. She is very well and speaks English astonishingly for the time she has been here.

In the beginning of my letter, I told you I had something to say of the masquerade I was at the other night. It is not my intention, my dear Angelica, to give

a detailed account of the entertainment. In this country it is an amusement entirely confined to the rich: — the lower classes of the people have no idea of it: you never see masks in the street as during the carnivals abroad. — The fancy dresses here are magnificent, and often elegant. — Every character and profession afford subjects, and the rooms were crowded: — but in general there was little support of character: the company were divided in dancing or the promenade. I sat in a box so situated, that we could see; and our friends, by stepping on a bench, might speak with us. I saw Mr. Vernon very busy in amusing himself at the expence of the young man who, I told you, wanted to convert me at Bath; but what induces me to speak particularly of the masquerade is the conversation of a man who personated a monk. I observed him pass several times, and he always looked at the box. He now and then stopped, raised his hands and said:

"Benedicite."

At length he stepped upon a bench,

and placing himself at a column, next to which I sat:

"Ave, Filia, gratiâ plena," said he, particularly addressing himself to me.

"Ave Pater," replied I, "but you are mistaken in me; you would not call me daughter, nor think me full of grace, if you knew me."

"I am sorry to find you a little heretic," said he, "and I must have some talk with you. I have a commission from the Pope to catechise and convert all you wild English damsels, and I have found it a very easy commission. — You are the last I have to convince."

"Father," said I, "you will only lose your time with me. I am not now to be convinced: — you had better go about your business."

"I have now no business but with you," replied he, "and, if you are obstinate, you shall at last be a nun. I will at present give you only two lessons to learn: the first is — You are to accuse yourself to me of all your sins, both those which you remember and those which you do not remember. The second is — You

are to believe that none of your friends, be they ever so good, will escape everlasting punishment, if they do not think as I do. Benedicite—I shall leave you to reflect on these points, and I expect on my return to find you ready to confess, and to believe in a punishment so just and merciful together—Benedicite."

He went down as he said this, and walked about at no great distance from the box, seldom addressing any one, but often looking our way:—at times he went into another room. I thought it extraordinary that he should have pitched upon me to convert; and of course I would not give him an idea of my own sentiments, particularly as I saw his object was quite the reverse of what he pretended. Caroline was also struck with the singularity of the circumstance. After some time he returned to his former station at the column.

"Are you ready to confess?" said he.

"I am, father," replied I.

"You shall be no nun, then," cried

he: "you are the speediest of all my heretics. — Now for your sins."

"I have sinned," said I, "in listening to you on a subject so out of its place, and I deserve a severe penance."

"Let me see," said he, — "a severe penance! Let it be this; to think seriously *at home*," — he laid a stress on the words *at home*, — "on the points I have proposed to you; should you find them difficult to be subscribed to, I will absolve you for continuing a heretic. But," continued he, altering his voice, which he lowered at the same time, "your remark is just; the subject is not one to be played with, nor was it my —"

He here broke off, and resuming his former tone of voice, addressed Caroline, and said,

"Your sister is wiser than a monk: — she has brought him to a confession: — pray make interest with her to absolve him."

"Sin no more," said I, "and you are absolved."

"Remember your words," cried he, "Sin no more, and you are absolved."

After this, he spoke occasionally both to Caroline and me, but never touched again upon the topic of conversion. I have mentioned this little occurrence as it affects me perhaps more than it should; for, though it may not be the case, I cannot help seeing in it the wishes of my family; and I sometimes suspect George to have been the monk, for he was away from us a great part of the time; and when he joined us in his domino the monk did not appear; when he lowered his voice too, I thought I recognized it. Both he and Caroline have been extremely delicate on this point, but I know their minds, and it is probable George thought it would not be deviating from delicacy, to make a trial under a mask. If it is so he has not acknowledged it. As for the point he put respecting the self-accusation of sins remembered or not remembered, I see no difficulty: trivial events may slip the memory, and these may be such as should have been repented; but I confess to you, Angelica, that his other

point has disturbed me a good deal: — it kept me awake the night of the masquerade for a considerable time after I was in bed; and it every now and then occurs to me always with great pain. It is a point on which I cannot reason, and I will try to banish it for the present from my thoughts, as my dear Caroline tells me she is uneasy at catching me frequently in a reverie.

I made another observation at the masquerade, which gave me some uneasiness. I noticed a mask in a black domino, who, for the greater part of the night, paraded the floor backwards and forwards, for ten or twelve paces on each side of our box, generally with his arms folded, sometimes farther off, sometimes nearer. He came close, when any person got upon the bench to speak to us, particularly the monk. I thought him a madman. We were soon tired of the confused scene, and constant motion before our eyes, and we came away very early. I will now dispatch my packet: it will be in Paris before you. You will, probably, be there long enough to receive

another letter from me. I will write the moment I hear from you. Adieu! my dearest sister,

Your most affectionate

AUGUSTA.

P. S. I hope you have Mr. Dartford safe: if so, remember me to him, — but I do not mean to try to supplant you. Remember all the family to him. George and Caroline send remembrances also to Mr. and Mrs. Dorrington and Miss Dorrington.

## LETTER LXV.

*Sir Francis Darrell to Mr. Vernon.*

Belmont.

MY DEAR VERNON,

I KNOW your estimate of friendship, and I do not scruple saying, come to me on receiving this; postpone your pleasures, and hasten to partake of the agony of your friend, who, in spite of his better resolutions, in spite of his trust in Providence, is sinking beneath the weight of reflections which embrace the past, the present, and the future. When I left London to avoid that unhappy woman, who, I find, has now completed her disgrace, I resolved to bring my fever to a crisis, and abide the issue. I mixed a determination never to think of marriage, with a delirious hope that I might be tranquil, after exposing my unclosed wounds to be probed by her, who alone has power to administer the balm that

may tranquillize. I have, indeed, brought it to a crisis, but I shall perish under it.

Determined upon the execution of the design which I mentioned to you, I ordered the deed of gift to be drawn up by my solicitor; and I waited till I could complete the execution of it before I ventured on the act I meditated in the disclosure of my heart. Impatient at the delay, I hurried to town last week, and, having to wait till the next day for the deed, I went to the masquerade. I was your friend the monk — but keep this to yourself. On my return, the day after, to Belmont with the deed of gift properly executed, a fit of irresolution overtook me. For a whole day I made fruitless efforts to recover myself, and your letter arrived to postpone the dreaded act for another day. At first, in the state I was in, I could not read it; but, persevering, it engaged my attention, and, though I did not enjoy it as I should have done at another time, it postponed the crisis another day. At length, it is done. All yesterday and to-day my heart has been

convulsed, and I suspect the malady will reach my brain.

You have sometimes seen the urn in the bower at Grove Park, and then it passed with you as a fancy, and no more. I afterwards mentioned it to you at an agitated moment, when I related my unexpected interview with Miss Saville in that bower, and you will recollect the circumstances sufficiently to know that it was connected with the horrors of my life. I had not courage enough at the time to tear my wounds open before you. Love has emboldened my heart, but the act has recoiled upon it; and all the little hope fancy has been fighting for against the occasional attacks of memory is gone; my nerves are unstrung, and I know not what is to become of me. In addition to what you already know, I must tell you that I had consigned my wretched story to a small chest inserted in the pedestal to the urn. I have, at times, to heighten my remorse, visited this chest and viewed its contents, but have never dared to read the memorial of it, which I wrote soon after the events it

recounts. The memorial has never been seen by any eye, but mine, on this globe; the events too are unknown, but they are recorded in Heaven. I hope it is also recorded how they have shaken my soul on earth. Yesterday morning I went over to Grove Park; I opened the pedestal, and brought the chest away with me. I prayed for strength, and received it. I unlocked the chest, and drew my manuscript from its case. I spent the day in meditating upon it, in humbling myself, in tears, in prayers. I slept little during the night:—to-day I have written some reflections upon it, and my intention is to send the manuscript with these reflections to Mr. Godfrey, to be communicated to Miss Saville, to whom I mean also to write a candid statement of my mind, assuring her of my determination never to marry, and imploring her to assist me in soothing my repentance by accepting the gift I have made. The exertions of my mind have shook my frame: I wish you with me for a day, and to make you the bearer of my packet to Godfrey. Come, then, and see the

wounds of your friend open, and say if they can ever be closed: — say if it be not a horrible presumption in me to dare to love such a woman; say if there lie not between us a frightful chasm, impossible to be passed; say — if it were even as you insist, that she loves me — oh! what a thought! — say whether I ought not, even then, and the more, to fly her for ever. Come soon, my dear Vernon. Would I could sleep — think not I am going to say *for ever*; that impiety is over, thank God! no, but — till you come, for thought is torture.

Your affectionate friend,

F. DARRELL.

## LETTER LXVI.

*Sir Francis Darrell to Mr. Godfrey.*

Belmont. March.

MY DEAR MR. GODFREY,

Our friend Vernon is the bearer of a packet which I have addressed to you, but it is equally meant for Mr. Saville, who, I hope will also consider this letter in the same light. I beg you both to forgive me for the pain I am about to give you, and for whatever may strike you as presumptuous or unnecessary in the enclosed to Miss Saville, which I leave open for your consideration. I have no right to make her unhappy, and I shall acquiesce in your determination if you shall judge it wrong to disturb her mind with my afflictions. I beg you too

to remember that I have been induced to the disclosure of those afflictions, and of the sentiments of my heart, by the unparalleled kindness and friendship which you have all bestowed upon me, and the unspeakable advantages I have derived from them.

Vernon will tell you the sad state of my mind; how I am combating with my feelings, and how resolved I am to conquer them. Till I do succeed, I cannot again see Miss Saville. Be assured I will not willingly give her a moment's pain. You know her value, and you will not be surprised that I have been able to estimate it. Did not my wretched story render me conscious how unworthy I am of her, how inadmissible as the suitor of her hand, I should not have thought of such requests as I have made to her in my letter. Had my heart been untainted, its sentiments should have been poured out in a different language, and I should have besought her acceptance of it with the utmost ardour. This I know to be out of the question, and so will you when you have read my manuscript. The

wretchedness I endured from reflection has been doubled since I have discovered that there exists on earth a happiness to which I dare not aspire; a happiness like yours, my dear friend; a happiness which must be his with whom Miss Saville consents to be united. It cannot be mine; but she is good, she is kind; and if Mr. Saville does not oppose it, which I trust he will not, I hope she will not refuse me the only earthly comfort I can now enjoy —that of her accepting the gift which Mr. Vernon brings. Pray let no false delicacy deprive me of such comfort. There is but one argument which may be used against me, and that I will do away. It may be said that the gift of a lover may be viewed with jealousy, but my love shall be like the love of beings in another sphere. I will absent myself; and whatever may be attributed to me, to her can only be ascribed friendship and goodness. Persuade her to the acceptance I beseech you; it will soften my hours of expiation, when I reflect upon the mind that will have the disposal of those means which

exceed my wants, and even my power of attending to the wants of others.

Now, my friends, read my story — first by yourselves. My wish is, that Miss Saville may know it; — I own it is the chief motive of my sending it. If it is communicated to her, let her read it before the letter I have addressed to her. When she knows all, let her judge me: I hope she will pity — I fear she will abhor me: but, in any case, I cannot bear to live unknown. I will not have her esteem, while I suspect she would think abhorrence my due. Conceive what I am suffering when you read this, and pity

Your attached friend,

F. DARRELL.

[*The following Fragment is a Copy of the Manuscript sent by Mr. Vernon.*]

## THE THREE DAYS.

*A Fragment.*

* * * * * * HE was one of those beings whom Nature seems to curtail of gall. With hardly enough of that bitter juice to perform the functions of his animal frame, none of it was ever carried in the course of his blood to his heart. It was a heart of great feeling — it partook of joy and of sorrow in no common degree; it impelled him to acts of kindness. Revenge, even resentment, suspicion, malignity of every kind were unknown to it. Forgiveness in him was not the dictate of duty; it was an inherent quality of his mind. He repelled wrong, if there were time to prevent it, and admonished the

wrong-doer; yet enmity, even to an injurer, he felt not. But of injury he seldom had to complain; inoffensive, and standing in no man's way, even detraction spared him. His predominant passions, perhaps his only ones, were love, joy, and sorrow. The last he had twice suffered to an excess, which had nearly sent him to the grave. The first time was on the unmerited cooling, and withdrawing of affection by a man whom he tenderly loved. When he perceived his friend's neglect, Harvey examined his heart to discover what he had done, or omitted, to produce this estrangement. "If I have done wrong," thought he, "I will repair it — friendship cannot suddenly cool in its affection without a cause. My friend must not be lost, he must and shall love me still, as I love him." He searched his heart in vain for his fault; he looked not for it in his friend's. "Well, then," said he to himself," I will regain him by encrease of kindness and assiduity." The unsuspicious Harvey had pitched upon the very worst expedient for the attainment of his object.

His kindness and assiduity were now irksome; for his friend, in consequence of a very unexpected event which had altered his feelings and his views, was become absorbed in pursuits and gratifications, which he knew the plain sense of Harvey would condemn. The sensitive heart of the latter beat irregularly and heavily for some time; but, after a while, it was comforted by the affection of a worthy and amiable wife, who convinced him of the folly of sorrowing for a loss which he had neither caused nor merited.

His second great sorrow was the loss of that wife, who died while yet in the prime of life, leaving him the father of a child, whose resemblance to her mother served at first to heighten his grief, though in time it encreased his resignation. Other misfortunes, however great, are simple evils: — the loss of a woman, whose good sense helps to support all other evils, and whose affection softens their rigour and consoles the heart, is a compound evil of such magnitude, that the man who persuades himself that he had found

such a one, sinks under it. Where now was she who taught him that a false friend was never a friend worth preserving? Who dressed and who healed the wound that false friend had made? Who now shall dress and heal the wound which death has inflicted? Who shall comfort, who shall console poor Harvey for the loss of such a wife? Who tell him how to bear the evil? Who soften it by bearing it with him? Sorrow found his heart without defence, without ally; it took possession and enthroned itself there. Harvey grew sick and listless, and would have died, had not the forlorn state of his young Matilda awakened the feelings of a father, and called upon him not to desert her.

Matilda was yet a child: she had not attained her fourteenth year. Handsome and innocent, and sadly attentive to the duties of a daughter, she could not, she did not, fail to engage the notice of her afflicted father; that notice was the means of recalling him to life from which he was perceptibly sliding. He noticed the silent, affectionate assiduities of his

daughter. The chord was struck by nature; it vibrated to his heart:—sorrow, though not soon banished, was shaken from its throne, and paternal love took possession of it.

Matilda was indeed handsome and innocent, but knew not that she was either the one or the other. She partook much of her father's character, and had been more trained to virtue, than warned of vice, by her mother:—her innocence was ignorance, combined with a natural disposition to goodness. Like her father, she meant no harm, and she suspected none. Like her mother, she attended to domestic duties, and did all in her power to comfort her father.

They lived at the skirt of a small town. Harvey had received a good education, and, in point of fortune, had seen better days; but, much reduced in circumstances, he was obliged to have recourse to some profitable exertion. Having sufficient skill in the art of drawing, he had established himself as a drawing-master, and had obtained practice enough to maintain him and his daughter with a

degree of ease; yet they kept but one servant. Matilda, affecting no pretension to a condition superior to that which her father appeared in, dressed simply but neatly, and assisted in the lighter parts of the care and service required in a family. Though young, she was competent to the management, having been trained to it by her mother from her infancy. Her father had taught her to draw; but, her situation requiring it, her needle was more handled than her pencil. She had few associates, but she was remarked by those who knew her for a singleness of heart and candour, that gained affection: all the little attentions and endearments of life were unstudied and natural to her. Harvey's relish of his earthly existence was restored by the repeated sounds that reached his ears of "What an amiable child is your Matilda!" Joy shared the throne of love in his heart. He recovered his health; he pursued his avocation unremittingly, with a view of amassing a little dowry for her by the time she became marriageable.

The town in which they lived was

pleasantly situated on a fine river: —their house was small, but it had the advantage of standing insulated in a pretty garden that ran down to the bank of the river, from which was seen at a short distance up the stream an ancient magnificent castle on the opposite bank. On the same side with their house stood a fine Gothic building devoted to the uses of a public school. Harvey's premises originally consisted of a couple of cottages on a piece of neglected ground, which he had observed to be capable of great improvement. He obtained it on lease at a small rent, and his taste soon gave it a beautiful appearance which attracted admiration. The tenement containing more apartments than were necessary for him and Matilda, he had agreed to receive one of the tutors of the college, who, he knew was paying his addresses to a young lady, whose family resided near the town.

Under the care of this gentleman there was a boy, soft by nature, with a capacity formed for learning, and a desire to take advantage of it. He was heir to a large

fortune; his mother was then alive, and, by the advice of the trustees of his father's will, she consented, though not very willingly, to give him a public education under the superintendance of a private tutor. This gentleman was himself but young; yet his learning and character had just obtained him the situation of an under-master at the college. His views were a scholastic establishment auxiliary to the college, and promotion in the church: but means were wanting to the immediate commencement of his plan; nor was the fortune of the lady he courted likely to supply them: time and patience were, therefore, requisite to the attainment of his wishes. Being acquainted with Harvey, he knew that he could spare him room, and he also prevailed upon him to board himself and his pupil. Agreeably situated, he spent his time in discharging his duty at the college, in assisting the boy in studying the tasks which were set him at the school, and in attentions to the lady who had gained his affections.

His pupil had been tenderly reared,

and carefully defended from the contagion of corruption; he was still but a child, in the commencing years of boyhood; he was fifteen; he had never been to school, but now, from the privacy of innocence, he was about to be plunged at once hap-hazard into the broad and turbulent stream of public education. The eye of a private tutor gave a hope, that the more injurious effects of promiscuous intercourse with companions of various natures, and more wordly knowledge, might be averted or counteracted: nor was advice wanting. Delmont, this was the name of the boy, was much longer preserved than most others by the strength which his nature had acquired, and by the friendly admonitions of his tutor. He passed the greater portion of his first year uncontaminated; it was as happy as it was unsullied: he was a devourer of learning; languages, and their stores of knowledge, were the charm of his youthful existence, and he learned much more rapidly than he could be taught. When he had done his tasks for the school, and had listened to his tutor, he explained

his lessons to Matilda, and versified for her in English what he had been set to compose in Latin. The boys of the school wondered at his turn, but admired, and let him go on in his own way. Nor was he at a loss for a play-mate. Matilda trundled a hoop as well as he, used the skipping-rope as gracefully, though not so actively, ran as swiftly, and struck the shuttlecock as unerringly. Till towards the end of the first year, cricket, and quoits, and fives, had not the attractions of his milder sports. He felt for Matilda the affection of a play-mate, he treated her as such, and sometimes told her he wished she were a boy, that they might ride together—an exercise which he took with his tutor, and of which he was very fond. Matilda had a similar childish affection for Delmont, which she showed by all the little endearments that mark the love of a sister for a brother. She attended to the keeping of his clothes in order, to the arrangement of the room in which he studied, to all the little nothings which neither he nor his tutor would probably think of, but which ne-

vertheless enter into the idea of comfort.

One day, as he was returning from the school, a big boy playfully seized him by the collar, saying:

"Come, come along with me and play cricket; — don't be such a molcoddle."

Delmont, with a jirk, liberated his collar from the gripe of the stripling, and ran home. The jirk, in freeing him had cost him the buttons on the collar of his shirt, which the hand of his schoolmate had grasped together with his waistcoat. He found Matilda, as usual, alone in the parlour.

"See, Matty," said he, "what Ruffhead has done," and he showed her the dismantled state of his collar. "Now, I am obliged to go and change my shirt."

"No," said Matilda, "you need not do that — I have a paper of buttons, and will sew one or two on in a minute."

While she was doing so, she asked him how it happened.

"He wanted me to go and play crick-

et, and seized me before I was aware," replied Delmont, "calling me a mol-coddle."

"How foolish," said Matilda; "pray don't mind what any of the school-boys say:— they are harum-scarum creatures, and want to make you as wild as themselves. There — now the buttons are on."

"Thank you Matilda," said Delmont, "I believe I ought to kiss you for being so kind."

"Pooh!" cried she, "it is not worth it."

"I will though," replied he, "if you will let me."

They kissed:— the kiss was mutual, and sweet, and as innocent as sweet, and the sweetness and the innocence of it long remained untainted: neither of them thought it a favour; neither of them thought of repeating it.

Some time after, — alas! it was towards the conclusion of that portion of life, when the union of happiness with unspotted honour was to be dissolved, — the same big boy again threw himself in his way and said —

"Stop a moment, Delmont, I am not going to hold you — I give you credit for your studying; we all see that you fag at your books, and, without flattery, your themes are allowed in general to be the very best in the school; — but don't tell me that a boy of your talents, with the knowledge he gets from Ovid, and Virgil, and Horace, and Homer, and no doubt you read Suetonius and Anacreon too, to say nothing of downright English, can pass his whole time in reading and composing. Don't I know there's a pretty girl always at your elbow?"

Delmont awoke as if from a sleep: a new train of ideas poured in upon him: — he looked confused, and said she was a very good girl, without exactly knowing what he meant by goodness.

"You be hanged," cried Ruffhead; "who said she was not good? She is all the better in my opinion."

Delmont, still confused, declared that he did not understand what he meant by "being all the better."

"Go along," cried he, "you are a

hypocrite: — will you tell me that you never kissed her?"

For the first time in his life, — some say it was also the last, — Delmont blushed.

"A confession," cried Ruffhead, "a clear confession!"

"I don't know what you mean," said Delmont, and walked away.

He proceeded but slowly: the business of the school, the theme, was forgotten; his head was full of other thoughts, but they were confused, and he knew not how to arrange them. He had not blushed when he kissed Matilda two months before. When asked the question, he could not deny it; — but why was the question asked? Why did he feel averse at the confession of it? Why blush then? The causes were in the look and in the manner of his questioner, of his new instructor, but he was not then sufficiently experienced to trace them there. He prolonged his walk, — he was almost afraid to go into the house. If Ruffhead's question supposed something wrong, he had no such consciousness; — yet as he had blushed now, it was a proof that he

had done unknowingly what ought to be blushed for. He had neither done nor thought wrong in respect to Matilda: if he had, would not her father and his tutor notice it, and tell him of it? It was true he had kissed her; but he would have done the same to a sister, or any child who had done him a kindness; and where in itself was the harm of a kiss; what could possibly be in Ruffhead's imagination?" These were the thoughts that passed in Delmont's head; and they agitated his heart.

The endeavouring to trace Ruffhead's imagination kept the figure of Matilda alive in his own, which unfortunately repeated to him the long-forgotten kiss. He felt his heart beat at the image; the pulsation informed him that there was more than he understood, and he guessed that there might be some connection unknown to him between a kiss and female honour. He took a very uncommon resolution, — that of consulting his tutor on the subject. He did — but without the slightest allusion to Matilda. —

His tutor laughed kindly, and put an abrupt conclusion to the enquiry.

"My dear boy," said he, "stick to your Greek and Latin: — it is not yet time for you to be making enquiries of this nature. As you grow into manhood you will be settling yourself in life; till then I advise you to think only of your studies; but meanwhile I see no reason to make the supposition which has come into your head. — By-the-bye, how came it into your head?"

Delmont, who was aware of the academic crime of inculpating a big boy, evaded the question, by repeating some line from Ovid, which he had been reading since the tutoring of Ruffhead. The infusion of the knowledge that his tutor advised him to delay was already begun, by the charge which had called forth his first blush; was illustrated daily by the new intelligence with which he read his classics; and was completed by his intercourse with his enlightened school-fellow. When he first saw Matilda, after parting with Ruffhead, it was not with his usual ease that he spoke to her, but her frank-

ness restored it. On the other hand his frankness had received a check which she observed; and she often asked the cause of his not speaking as much and as freely as usual.

Delmont was now himself grown a big boy: — this but made him the more agreeable to the unsuspicious Harvey: his understanding was ripening, and his knowledge extending; and he was pleased with his taste for drawing, of which he took lessons from him. He saw no danger to his child, from this good and sensible boy. He pursued his business for the greater part of the day abroad, and at home nothing appeared that could give him pain, or raise apprehension; on the contrary, happiness and innocence adorned his cottage: — Delmont's tutor thought so too, and he continued to indulge with the chosen of his heart those visions, which he had admonished his pupil to postpone.

It is unnecessary to trace further the steps of corruption. With Ruffhead Delmont made other friends: their society became daily more pleasant to him:

they were lively and acute, and anticipated knowledge of every kind. His heart however was never open to them. There was one indeed with whom he felt considerable congeniality of taste. They were in the same class, and took pleasure in each other's compositions and repetitions. Their chief association however was at the school, or in going to or from it. They seldom met at their apartments. When Delmont resolved to mix with the scholars more than he had done, he felt it a misfortune that the only one, for whom he had a preference, was about to leave the school, for their congeniality was ripening into friendship. Seized with a military rage in contemplating the exploits of the British troops in the Peninsula, that friend's ardour for the classics only fomented his desire of serving under the great captain, whom chance was driving on to the pacification of the world; and his relations indulged him in his wish. The others, by whom Delmont was now attracted, were lads growing into men, who piqued themseves on comprehending the abstruse reasoning of the

modern philosophical works, which they privately studied, and by which they were convinced that every thing existing was the effect of chance, that existence terminated with life, and that the laws which regulated the social world were arbitrary and unnatural. However repugnant at first the heart of Delmont to these opinions, after studying them, he began to take a pride in the power of his understanding to defeat arguments, which he attributed to the weak impulses of wishing, and of a fond attachment to protracted existence, against the laws of nature.

With these philosophical principles, Delmont was initiated into a full knowledge of all that his tutor was desirous to have had reserved till the maturity of his mind and person should render the knowledge agreeable to nature, and no way dangerous. He did not, however, satisfy his mind; he was puzzled by his reflections; and he could not, as he was taught, consider Matilda as his natural prey. He scrupled not, however, to find some occasion of repeating his kiss, which she

returned as before, unaffected, and cordially. She knew no difference between this and the former one — Oh! what a difference did *he* feel. It was he, not the poor Matilda, who had eaten of the tree of knowledge; it was he who had listened to the devil; but it was she who was to be sacrificed for the unresisting, weak, unthinking, prostration of the man — the boy. She was still a child, an innocent child, and loved, purely loved, the being whose new-raised passions soon became irresistible, and in an evil hour bore down his better affections. Tutored as he was, he knew he had done wrong. She too knew she had done wrong, but was little aware of the extent of her folly.

"We have done wrong, Delmont," said she to him, "but we may retrieve ourselves:— I will tell my father, and you shall marry me."

He convinced her that he would not be allowed to marry, and that secrecy for the present was their only hope.

Time rolled on; and, with caution, the inebriation of the impassioned boy and the simple-minded Matilda passed unnoticed.

At length a circumstance took place, which produced a great alteration in the comprehension, and in the happiness of the unfortunate Matilda. There was a young man, a friend of Delmont's tutor, who frequently came to the house. — He saw, he liked, at last he loved this pretty, open-hearted, attentive, engaging girl. He had good prospects in the church, and his present income, though small, was adequate to comfort. He told his friend his opinion of Harvey's daughter, and that he wished to win her affection : — his friend consulted Harvey, and the equally simple-minded father proposed the lover to his daughter for a husband. She was now turned sixteen, grown handsomer, and possessed an indescribable engaging manner from her attentions to others being not acquired by imitation, but a quality of her nature.

Poor Matilda! the sounds of lover and husband from her father's lips gave an unexpected shock to her heart, and awakened reflection not natural to her. She had never been taught to reflect : — all her actions, all her sentiments, all her

endearing manner, were the result of impulses,—the impulses of a good and amiable nature. She always meant to act right, and therefore did not conceive that she could act wrong. She did not reason on her conduct: she saw that she pleased, and, collecting from that that she was right, she was happy; but reflection now came to convince her that impulse was not the proper source of virtue, or of love, and consequently not that of happiness. The mention of a husband opened her eyes, and she saw that she was lost.

Sorrow was her first emotion: shame she knew not yet; that was to come. Equally unacquainted with the nature of the human frame as with the operations of the mind, she was at a loss to account for some sensations and symptoms, which she had never before experienced; yet she was not so completely ignorant as not to have some woeful suspicion that she was in a state that could not long be concealed. The first secret workings of shame began to operate upon her mind: she knew that if such

was the case, it was one which all the virtuous were agreed in stamping with disgrace.

The anxiety to obtain some precise knowledge of this suggested the first artful expedient that had ever entered her too unsuspicious, too innocent mind, and, as has been said of her seducer's blush, it was the last. A poor woman had lately been delivered in a neighbouring cottage: Matilda, who had before sent her some assistance, resolved to go and talk with her. She took her some refreshment herself, and stated her doubts, and made her enquiries so artfully, that in spite of the beating of her heart as she proceeded, and her torture-bent-brows, she obtained the complete certainty of the dreaded truth, without betraying that she was personally concerned. Not content with ascertaining this sufficiently oppressive fact, she sifted the poor woman's thoughts upon the moral heinousness and disgrace of it. All she heard tended to give shame its most horrid aspect, and to drive her to desperation.

On returning home, she was going into her own room for privacy, but Delmont, who was alone in the house, on hearing her come in, ran down to meet her. She turned into the parlour. He flew towards her to embrace her. Before he approached near enough to touch her, he suddenly stopped and gazed at her with terror. She had done nothing, said nothing to arrest his purposed embrace; but not a step more could he advance: his feet were rivetted to the floor, as if by enchantment. She stood before him erect, motionless, and firm: her arms were folded over her breast; — her eyes glared on him; — her lips quivered as if whispering; her brows were raised in agony of despair, not bent in anger: — it was a look of desperation and of madness.

"Matilda!" cried he, hoping to bring her to herself. —

"Well!" said she, in a loftier tone than was usual on her voice.

"My dear Matilda," said he, "I was coming to kiss you."

"And what prevents you?"

Delmont advanced a step: — Matilda, unchanging in every other respect, suddenly sunk the uplifted brow of despair, and bent it into two deeply lowering arches; her eye-balls still glaring on him, her lips still quivering as if she whispered. He was terrified: — he ran for a glass of water, and, falling on his knees, begged her to take it. At that moment she fetched a deep sigh; her features suddenly fell as it were into their natural position, and she put out her hand for the water. With the change of countenance, she lost the firmness of her posture; and her hand trembled in receiving the glass: — he assisted in raising it to her lips. The irritable part of her frame had undergone a violent struggle, and a convulsion-fit would probably have been the immediate result, had not Delmont's terrified appearance, and his momentary absence brought her to herself. The agitation had been caused by the sight of him so soon after the confirmation which she had acquired of her forlorn state, and while she was contemplating its consequences.

She was standing near a chair: she sat down after drinking the water. Seeing her now more composed, Delmont would have pursued his purpose of embracing her. He offered to take her hand. She repelled his mildly — still without speaking.

"My dear Matilda," said Delmont, in a supplicating tone, "I beseech you to recover yourself — what is the matter? what has happened?"

She answered not, but her eyes were fixt upon his face; yet they bespoke no attention to their apparent object: their outward vision was suspended; — it was occupied internally. Again he called upon her name: — she heard him not: — he seized her hand now unresisting — it was inanimate. The fit was coming on again; — he shook her, he knelt, he kissed her hand, he besought her to relieve him. The motion which he gave to her frame again recalled her to her senses, and she said in a low under-voice:

"Pray let me go to my room."

She now allowed him to assist her.

He raised her from the chair: the agitation had left her feeble. She slowly tottered across the room, he supporting her by the arm. He opened the door; they reached the staircase; she raised her foot and placed it on the first step: in the attempt to draw up the other foot, her exertion failed, the suspended fit returned, and she fell in strong convulsions upon the floor of the passage.

The conscience-struck Delmont viewed the horror with double emotion, for her and for himself. There was at that early period of his life a tenderness in his nature, which would make him writhe at the sufferings of others; — and here the sufferer was Matilda, the charmer of his boy-hood: — what did he not feel for her? What did he not feel for himself? He was the cause of her suffering, the destroyer of her innocence, perhaps her murderer! All his better feelings revived in his heart, but with them entered that worst of fiends, that bitterest foe of peace, that cancer of the heart, Remorse. He cursed himself, he cursed

his friend, he cursed the world, he cursed — no; he denied a God.

There is another passion, which in the female breast rivals remorse, exceeds it in agony, and defies even death. That passion had suddenly, without the slightest warning, darted like a vulture on the tender, undefended, truth-dismayed heart of the lost Matilda. Shame had grasped it with both its talons, the piercing points of which met in the core. She could not endure the sight of her father, whom she loved most tenderly, nor that of the man who had thought her worthy of being made his wife; above all, she could not endure the sight of Delmont.

When Harvey, as usual, returned to dinner, he learned from the servant what had happened. He found his daughter in bed, and apparently asleep. At the beginning of the convulsion-fit, the maid had run for the apothecary, while Delmont exerted himself as well as he could to prevent her hurting herself. After the fit had spent itself, she was conveyed to her room, and the maid

directed to see that she was kept quiet. Harvey looked at her with tears in his eyes, but spoke not to her:—he eagerly required of the maid some account of the cause of the disorder. She had no account to give:—she had run on hearing her fall, to see what was the matter, and found her in convulsions in the passage. Harvey sat down on a chair at his daughter's bed-side: the maid left the room to attend to her business. Silence, a dead silence prevailed, while the anxious father watched for the first indication of his child's waking, that he might comfort her, tell her how he loved her, and bid her be well. He watched in vain: her closed eye was sealed by a tyrant more powerful than sleep, as despotic as death. Harvey received the summons to dinner, but moved not:—he was bound to his seat by a chain stronger than adamant. The profound, unbroken silence continued, and the day ended, and night darkened the room, and Harvey watched, and Matilda's eyes remained closed.

During those solemn, awful hours,

Delmont was alone: — it happened that his tutor went early into the country to fulfil an engagement. Poignant feelings, but of a different nature, tortured his breast: — his dinner was carried away untouched. The servant begged him to eat.

"How can I eat?" he said, "while Matilda is in danger?"

"Do you love her so well then?" said the maid.

He was at first startled by the question, but, perceiving no covered meaning, he answered,

"How can I but love a person with whom I have lived like a brother for more than two years."

He passed the rest of the day, sometimes in his little study sitting at his table, his head supported by his arm, sometimes in the parlour walking to and fro, sometimes at the foot of the staircase, listening. At that time Delmont was not the abandoned wretch he afterwards became. In spite of his new associates, he had never brought himself to think that Matilda was the frail and foolish

girl who might be duped for amusement, and deserted without injury, which was the general principle laid down among them in their appreciation of female honour; and he had so much still of his own honour left, that as he strolled about the room, or listened at the staircase, he meditated the only reparation that could, if any could, be made. But that reparation he knew he was restrained from making by the laws of his country. He resolved, however, if she recovered, or if she would see him again, to make it the subject of comfort to her, by a solemn promise of effecting it the moment it was in his power. These may be called virtuous emotions, but they were foolish and impotent, and like all other virtue, imaginary.

In the evening, the apothecary returned to see his patient. He had been able to obtain but little information from Matilda respecting her ailment: — he saw no danger from the convulsions, and did not seek any uncommon cause for them: — he quieted Harvey by assuring him that it was very common for girls

to be attacked by them; — the only fear was that of their becoming habitual, against which care must be taken: — quiet, exercise, and cheerfulness, were the best antidotes. Harvey, though he could not break away from his daughter's bed-side for a meal, was in the parlour in a moment when he heard there was a person there who could speak decidedly on her state. Delmont was there too, but not so easily quieted, for he traced Matilda's disorder beyond the limits of the medical art; but to know that she was not in immediate danger was some relief to him.

Though Harvey's mind was made comparatively easy by the doctor, he could not account for her long sleep; but this his comforter attributed partly to exhaustion, and partly to the medicine he had administered. The feelings of the father were thus reduced to a state of calm.

Not so Matilda's: she too was more in the secret of her malady, than he who undertook to cure it. She heard him announced; she knew she must see him.

During her apparent torpor, she had been forming resolutions, and fortifying her mind to look even at her father, whose fate his silent watching at her bed-side fully foreboded. Her tears had been slowly and silently flowing during those hours. She took the opportunity of his absence to raise herself, and give way to them. She dried her eyes, and for her father's sake resolved to appear better. The comforted Harvey, though from the shade of the room he could not well see her, heard her speak and was happy. A message from her in the morning, assuring him she was better and should rise in the course of the forenoon, gave him spirits, and he went out to his ordinary avocation.

Delmont's self-restraint could hold out no longer. He desired the maid to beg her to let him see her but for a moment.

"Sir," said the servant, "you don't know what you ask."

He had evidently forgotten himself, yet could hardly forbear urging the request.

"Tell her then," said he, "what I

have said, and it will show that I think of her."

The maid complied, and brought him for answer, that she should be extremely hurt if he attempted to see her up stairs; but, if he went as usual to his class, he should see her on his return in the parlour. This appeased the violence of his impatience, and he submitted.

Matilda had risen. She had even walked out. Delmont found her sitting in the parlour. She looked well; but as he entered, she put her hand to her forehead, and pressed her temples to abate the pulse of those arteries: the hand served, at the same time, as a screen between her eyes and Delmont. As he went forward with a smile, she said,

"Pray, softly —"

He recollected his former horror, and stood still.

"Sit, I beg you," added she; "I will speak to you presently."

"My dear Matilda!" cried he; she waved her hand, and repeated:

"I will speak to you presently."

Poor Matilda had more in her mind

than it could well hold, and little did Delmont imagine its contents. She was endeavouring to arrange the disclosure of them when he came in: his entering confused her. She found it difficult to reduce her thoughts to method; and, indeed, a slight degree of insanity had already taken place in her brain. She could not speak till a fresh shower of tears came to her relief. He seized her hand; — she allowed him to hold it, and, looking at him through her tears, she said, without using his name:

"Will you answer me truly a question which I shall put to you, whether it be for or against you?"

"Most truly," said Delmont.

"Tell me then, and mind that it be most truly, for more depends upon the truth of your reply than you are aware of — Were you, or were you not previously conscious of the shame to which I should be brought?"

Confounded at the question, and again alarmed for her senses, Delmont hesitated.

"Speak!" cried she.

"Matilda," said he, and again hesitated.

"Speak," said she, in a more decided tone.

The horror-struck boy dropped her hand; and, clasping his own hands together, gazed at her, but spoke not.

"You have said enough," cried she.

"I have not spoken," exclaimed he.

"Yes, and most truly too; — but this sinking. I shall again sink; — my medicine, my medicine."

"Where is it?" cried he.

She pointed to the chimney-piece, and said, "Pour it into that cup."

It was a beautiful china breakfast-cup, which he himself had made her a present of: — the medicine stood by it. In haste to prevent the sinking that threatened her, he noticed not the cup, but, pouring the contents of the bottle into it, presented it to her lip.

"I thank you, I thank you," said she: "I shall now soon be well."

A pause ensued: — he replaced the empty cup on the chimney-piece. She gazed at him as he went, and as he re-

turned. He stood before her;—he caught her eye; an unusual electric fire seemed to dart from it; an unnatural smile rested on her cheek.

"Had you unknowingly brought me to shame," said she, "I would have pitied, I would have spared you. I was with a woman yesterday, who told me the story of a man who murdered the girl he had seduced, in order to spare her shame and his own. He was a kind, a generous seducer.—Would you be less generous? Would you have me meet shame, that is worse than death?"

"Matilda," cried Delmont, "I am no seducer; I was myself seduced by my passions. I beseech you not to talk of death. You are innocent, and if I am not, I may, I will, in time, make the reparation due to your innocence: a few years hence it will be in my power:—when I am of age, my hand and fortune shall be yours."

Delmont, whose nature, it has been seen, was originally tender and good, now felt keenly, as he witnessed the agony of heart which the knowledge of

her state produced in the woman he had injured, and whose innocent character, not vice, had occasioned her delusion. He looked at the ruin he had caused, and he was sincere in the intention he expressed. This proof of penitence softened the growing harshness of her feelings towards his acknowledged crime.

"Poor boy!" said she, "your virtues are your own; your vices are contracted. I wish I had spared you this last wound, that must rankle in your heart while you live—but, no; I recall my wish. Suffering will heal it; you must suffer."

Delmont now thought her wild; he besought her to be composed, and to talk more kindly, and more intelligibly.

"I will," said Matilda. "Sit down and hear me."

She then, with some degree of order, gave him a detailed account of her feelings on the proposal of a husband to her, of her suspicions respecting her own state, of the means by which she had convinced herself, of the conversation with the poor woman on the loss of innocence and the shame attending it, of its

effect upon her, part of which he too well knew, of her situation in the room with her father at her bed-side, whom she had not dared to look at, " and whom," said she, as she concluded her detail, " I never more will face."

Delmont listened, appalled, to a succession of horrors arising out of an action, which, however grey-beards and professional preachers might denominate vice, had been settled with his new friends, to be the natural and general practice throughout the world. He now saw the injury in another point of view, as to the effect it had in preventing her marriage, as to the still more dreadful effect of making her a mother out of wedlock. Thus far he saw how greatly he had been her enemy: he saw not yet that he was her — murderer! — and, therefore, when she said she would never see her father's face again, he once more assured her that she should be his wife, and urged her in the mean time to adopt some mode of concealment of her situation.

Matilda, the child Matilda, awakened

to the full sense of shame, had resolved on death, which was less intolerable to her thoughts. Her resolution being taken, she determined to awe the guilty boy, in a manner which he alone should know. His sorrow, his agitation, his offering all the reparation in his power, had shaken her resolution; and, though she could not recall the act, she meant to soften it, by the omission of the severe blow she had determined to strike; but when the thought of his suffering being the best means of atoning for his guilt, and for recovering peace of mind occurred to her, she resumed her first determination of leaving a regenerating awe impressed upon his heart. She fixed her eyes upon him.

"Delmont," said she, "the man whom that poor woman talked of was a generous lover: — you, I thank you, Delmont, are not less so."

"Oh! talk not in this frenzied manner," cried he, "I beseech you."

"Listen. — He brought his mistress to shame, but he saved her the horrid

feeling." Matilda gently drew herself up into an attitude of horror, as she added, — "he murdered her."

"Great God!" cried Delmont, "you have lost your senses."

"No," said she, "I am not out of my senses. I know what I am saying; you, Delmont, have been an equally generous lover."

As she uttered this, she carried her eyes to the cup, which he had handed to her: his followed, and were fixed upon it by hers: — he trembled, — he anticipated, — he already knew what was to follow.

"Generous boy!" continued she, "you have wiped away my shame. I shall not feel it.—Yes—you are right, — that cup, your first gift, contained your last."

If individual suffering could atone for guilt, Delmont's was already half atoned, as he heard these words. He gazed at the speaker; — he fell upon his knees, — he clasped his hands.

"Oh!" cried he, as he wrung them; "recall those words; say they were meant to terrify, to punish me, but say,

say they are not true; — the terror, the punishment, is more than I can bear."

She was affected by his agitation — she felt for him: he had been more guilty than she had hoped to find him, but his suffering at the moment, and that which she foresaw would embitter his life, excited her compassion, and she forgave him from the bottom of her heart.

"Rise, unhappy boy," said she, "rise and come hither."

"Say then that the ingredients of the cup —"

"Come hither, and hear what I have to say."

She put out her hand: he rose and took it into his, which she pressed as she wept.

"I forgive you, Delmont," said she, "with all my heart."

"But unsay those words," cried he, unable and unwilling to believe them.

She moved her hand to withdraw it from his, but he detained it: — a look disengaged it.

"Be comforted," said Matilda, "and take care that your agitation does not

betray you. Be comforted, if the postponement of my death can comfort you —"

"Oh!" cried he, "I live, I live, I live."

He sprang unexpectedly forward, pressed her to his heart, and exclaimed that she should be his wife. Matilda wept.

"No," said she, "I cannot be your wife; and my resolution is fixt: I cannot, will not live."

"You shall, you shall; I will this day ask your father's leave to consider you as mine."

Poor Matilda! even the pang of shame was not more acute than was this woe-timed kindness. She continued weeping.

"I know not what God will do with me; but I know that there is no peace on earth for me. I hope he will forgive me, for he is good."

"Good!" muttered Delmont, whose mind was at that time opening to the secrets and miseries of philosophical necessity.

"And I will pray," continued she, "with my last breath, that he may forgive you, the only person I have to forgive on earth; for every body has been kind to me, and I have injured nobody, except my poor father, who does not know it."

Matilda bit her lip, as if in pain, and rose; the poison she had swallowed had begun its work; she resolved to spare Delmont the horror of seeing her die, and, if possible, to conceal the cause of her death. She told him that the medicine she had taken was to compose her; that she was going to lie down, and hoped it would have the effect.

"Don't be alarmed at present," said she. "If you wish me well, your agitation will not make me so. I have one favour to ask of you: I cannot bear the thought of seeing my father to-day; will you assist me in preventing it?"

"Tell me how."

"By watching for his return, and making it a request from me that I should be left quiet this afternoon."

"He will think that extraordinary."

"I cannot, and will not see him to-day; it must be prevented. I will write a note, giving him some reasons as an excuse — will you deliver it?"

"I will."

"Thank you, thank you."

The note was already written; it was such a one as Delmont might read without alarm; the excuses were common and unsatisfactory; but, to please her, he undertook her commission without making an objection. He saw not, as he looked over while she read the note, the index at the bottom of it, directing attention to the next page. She folded it, and put it into his hand. Again she bit her lip — again she looked at him through her tears: — her heart was full; she had but an hour to live: — with all that heart she forgave him: — its tenderness, its original tenderness towards him revived. The taking leave of him was a trial which had nearly betrayed her.

"Poor boy!" said she, holding out her hand to him, — "Do you remember our first kiss?"

"Yes, Matilda."

"The remembrance of that kiss is sweet," said she. "Forget the rest, and in the hope that God will forgive them; take another like the first."

She drew him towards her; she kissed him. The kiss was as innocent, but not as sweet: — this was given in sorrow — that in gladness of heart.

She pressed his hand once more, and said, "Good bye!"

He walked with her to the foot of the stairs where she had fallen the day before.

"Shall I see you again," said he, as she went up.

She answered, "I hope so."

He meant on earth: Matilda meant in heaven. She looked at him for the last time, and went into her room.

* * * * * * * * *

Ye rulers of destiny! ye angels of heaven! where were ye when Matilda died? Powers and dominions! where were ye? Unbounded source, Universal Dispenser of good! where wast thou

when Matilda died? Ye subordinate ministers of good! could ye not be on earth and in heaven at the same time? Tell me not of such crampt, such unaccomplished deities. I'll have none of you.

* * * * *

Delmont, relying on the composing virtue of the medicine which Matilda had taken, and still more on the equivocal hope of seeing her again, passed the hours that intervened till the return of Harvey, with considerable calm. Not that he was easy; he foresaw wretchedness enough from the new light in which the unhappy child viewed their intercourse; but his feelings had been tost from life to death, from death to life, in a tempest of passions, which had subsided, and his fears were allayed.

Harvey arrived, received his daughter's note, and, to the amazement of Delmont, flew to her chamber. Nearly an hour elapsed before he was heard or seen again, except when the servant, going

up to remind him of time, saw him leaning over the bed, and did not disturb him. Delmont's tutor, actuated by a kind apprehension, tapped gently at the door. Receiving no answer, he opened it, and went in. Harvey was still bending over the lifeless body of his daughter. Delmont, who had followed his tutor, stood at the door.

"Harvey!" said the tutor, in a low voice. Harvey spoke not. Delmont's prepared fears took alarm—he rather flew than ran for the apothecary. His tutor conceived it best to retire. Ignorant of the fact, he left Harvey exploring death in the features of his child. Delmont, no longer sufficiently master of himself to attend to the cool dictates of propriety, allowed the apothecary no halt, and almost dragged him up to Matilda's chamber. As he entered with him, he observed Harvey hastily quit the bed-side, and seize upon a letter which he put into his pocket; he then turned to Delmont, and said,

"Sir, this is no place for you."

Delmont withdrew; but as he shut

the door, distinctly, heard him say, "Doctor, my child has just expired in convulsions."

* * * * * * *

The heart of man beats slow or quick, as driven more or less powerfully by the passions of his horrid nature; but time moves on with even pace. Matilda's remains were deposited in the church-yard. The doctor was convinced, or seemed to be so, that the death of Harvey's daughter was natural; and he convinced all enquirers that it was so; and though there was afterwards some talk of the suddenness of it, none went so far as to think of a violent death. There were but two persons in life to whom the truth was known; and of these two one was aware that it was known to the other, and one believed that the knowledge of it was confined to himself. The death-struck Harvey was the former, the wretched Delmont the latter. The feelings manifested on the occasion by a father were easily accounted for, but the

extreme violence of those of an unconnected school-boy was thought surprising. Some gave him credit for exquisite sensibility; others, less charitable, attributed it to an unwarrantable passion — but, whatever was the cause, his tutor was seriously alarmed. At the time of the funeral Delmont was confined to his bed, and talked so wildly, that he was thought delirious.

He was nearly a fortnight before he came down stairs, and then his studies were neglected; he ate little, spoke little, never smiled, never joined the other boys. But his behaviour to Harvey was the most unaccountable circumstance. He had not seen him since he had heard him utter those dreadful words: "My child has just expired in convulsions." He no sooner cast his eye upon him than he saw the double murder he had committed. Harvey's countenance was changed; it was completely fallen; the march of death was visible in every feature. His eye, in spite of its mournful resignation, darted envenomed stings into the heart of Delmont, who, when it

was turned upon him, instantly averted his own. He could not endure to meet it. And he could hardly look at him without meeting it, for Harvey's eye incessantly surveyed him. "Does he know me? Does he know the fact?" would Delmont sometimes say to himself. "If he does, would he have spared me so long? Would he sit at the same table—be in the same room with me? He *cannot* know it—yet why keep his eye eternally fixed upon me? Does not the look speak the word, murderer? No, the few words he says to me are mild:—it is my own consciousness, and that is even worse than the certainty of his knowing it. Would I were dead! Life is hell, and death is peace."

His tutor expostulated with him on his conduct, awakened him to a sense of the posthumous injury he might do Matilda's reputation, and reminded him that the time approached when he should remove to prosecute his studies in one of the universities. All was in vain.—Matilda's grave, Matilda shrouded, haunted him in his dreams nightly:—her father's eye

pierced his heart daily: — he had no peace by day, no rest by night. His tutor determined to remove him; he had been long enough excused attending the school, and it was necessary to rouse him. "To make the removal you wish," thought Delmont, "you must teach me how to leave reflection and feeling behind."

The removal was at all events determined upon. The day before it was to take place Delmont's wretched feelings were wrought to an encreased excess of agony by the too intelligible eye of Harvey. It was never off him: — it never ceased saying "Matilda! Give me my Matilda!"

In the afternoon Delmont's tutor was gone out; Harvey remained at home: — he had not followed his employment since the death of Matilda. Delmont was in the garden. Tired of his existence, he was meditating on the example which had been set him by a girl of his own age, when he saw Harvey coming towards him. The wretched father could not have looked more like death itself

had he come from his grave. As he came near, Delmont perceived a ghastly smile upon his face. He put out his hand. Delmont wished the earth would open and swallow him : — what was to follow?

"Let us shake hands, Mr. Delmont," said he.

Delmont took the offered hand : — it was already a cold, hard, and inanimate substance, which the rest of his body was soon to be. He involuntarily dropped it, conceiving at the moment that it was a premeditated reproach.

"What," cried he, "do you mean, Sir?"

"Let us shake hands, Mr. Delmont," replied Harvey. "We are going to part : I am not very well this afternoon, and am going to bed ; I shall not see you to-morrow. — I merely wish to shake hands, and to say, that I hope you will do well, and that you shall have my prayers."

"Oh ! God ! God ! this is too much !" exclaimed the agonized Delmont : "what

is it you mean? what is it you know? and what do you charge me with?"

"I mean a charitable farewell: I know more than I wish to speak; and I charge you with nothing."

"Harvey," said Delmont, looking at him with dread, remorse, and pity, "you are ill."

"Sir," said Harvey, "I am dying."

"This is too much," cried the frenzied Delmont: "I will die first; I deserve death, not you. There," added he, drawing a pistol from his pocket, and offering it, "There, take it, and take the vengeance due.—I destroyed your daughter—I murdered her—I murder you."

"I have no vengeance to take," said Harvey, mildly.

"No!" cried Delmont: "then I'll take it for you."

He turned the pistol to his head and fired it; and he would now have been at rest, instead of partaking the horrors of his paltry race, but for the malignant charity, the barbarian forgiveness, of the

meek and humble-minded Harvey, whose dying hand had life enough remaining to strike aside the instrument of death, and of peace.

"Rash, rash young man," cried Harvery; "is this the way to atone for any fault you have committed? Live, and I forgive you: it is on condition that you live that Matilda forgives you. I did not mean to tell you what I know, but you have yourself disclosed it; promise me not to attempt your life, and I will endeavour to lighten the burden that oppresses you."

Delmont threw himself in desperation on his knees at the feet of Harvey, and hung upon him.

"Live, repent, and you will be forgiven," said Harvey: "God is good."

"Good!" exclaimed the wretched boy, starting up, "Where is there any good? Where is there any God? Why repentance? Why forgiveness? What goodness is there in wretchedness? Why create a nature of crime and misery? If there is such a place as heaven, will Matilda find there any angel purer than her-

self? Why then shame, and agony, and death?"

"I am sorry for you," said Harvey: "this error is worse, is more fatal than your first; but I have not strength to argue with you: — would to God I could set you an example more powerful than words! I die resigned — I die with hope. I am exhausted," continued he, "and must leave you. Here are some papers I meant to give you when — a few days hence — but you are going, and I shall see you no more. — Take them, therefore, now, and may the impression they make be favourable to your peace on earth, and to your salvation hereafter."

Delmont, amazed and stupefied, received the papers.

"Farewell!" said Harvey: "it is indeed incomprehensible; but, rely upon it, it will be explained hereafter."

Delmont was dumb: he stared at the object before him as in a dream, in which he imagined he saw the spectre of Matilda's father gliding away, after having summoned him to the gates of Death. Harvey stopped not till he reached the chamber

in which he had slept since the funeral of Matilda. In her chamber and in her bed had he passed his miserable nights, sometimes in broken sleep, and oftener in watching — and there he died.

* * * * * * * *

Behold, ye pious sinners, ye clingers to miserable existence, ye fond hopers of life patched to life, ye adorers of mystery! behold your scheme of benevolent creation, of lovely nature, of wisdom unspeakable! wisdom and benevolence, that sent Matilda to her grave to punish a boy; that wasted her father to a spectre, and kept him dying piece-meal a month, for what? to punish a boy.—Brilliant scheme! that packs in the same case genius and folly, virtue and vice, good and bad, joy and sorrrow, hope and despair, love and hate, under the name of MAN—what an amusing automaton for the celestials!

* * * * * * * *

The papers which Harvey gave to Delmont, consisted of the note he had himself delivered, and a letter from Matilda to her father, accompanied by one from himself addressed to Delmont. The note, as already observed, consisted of unsatisfactory excuses, and was a mere cover to the request added on the following page, that on his return, he would, alone and without notice to any one, come to her chamber, and, if he found her not awake, look in the drawer of her table for a letter, which she begged he would open quite alone.

## THE LETTER.

MY DEAR FATHER,

On your presence of mind I rely for your granting the favour I am going to request. Resolve before you read any farther, for my sake, for your own sake, and I will add, for God's and our Saviour's sake, to have patience to read to the end of my letter before you speak or go out of the room. I am going to tell you the nature of my illness, and I write it, because I should never be able to speak it to you. Do not come to the bed to speak to me till you finish reading this letter.

Oh! my dear father, my illness is a dreadful one, and one that I cannot bear, nor can you; and this is the worst of it to me. I can hardly bring myself to

tell it. What shall I say? Perhaps you already guess it. I lost my dear mother too soon, and I never was sufficiently warned of the danger of ignorance, or instructed in the consequences of neglecting a holy ceremony, which is of such importance to virtue and to religion. My catechism I learned by rote, and the sermons I heard preached I understood still less. I never felt an inclination to do wrong: and I relied upon that for all that I imagined was virtuous. When I had listened to the wishes of one for whom I had a great affection, something told me I had done wrong, but little did I think I had brought myself and my father to utter shame. It was not till you proposed a husband to me that I suspected I had committed a crime of the most shocking nature, one that rendered a woman incapable of being a virtuous wife.

Thinking again and again upon your proposal, a new thought came into my mind, which made me suspect that I was in a situation forbidden by the Almighty to unmarried women, and impossible to.

be concealed. My anxiety for information was very great. I could not ask you for it. I was afraid to ask any body else. I fell upon a plan which gained it without giving any suspicion of my reasons for enquiring. — I prepared a number of questions, and went to see poor Grace Hutchins, who was lately brought to bed. — Oh! my dear father, what a day was yesterday to my heart! A very few of my questions sufficed as a text for the good woman. — I was too soon instructed in more than was necessary for me to know: — and the accounts she gave me of lost young women, of deceit, of dissimulation, of madness, of murder — the pictures she drew of shame involving the parents of vicious girls, raised such a fire in my heart that I thought I should go mad. I endeavoured to lessen the pain I felt, by persuading myself that I was not vicious — nor am I, my dear father; no, indeed I am not — but I am worse. I am no longer ignorant of the nature of the crime I have committed. I know the value of the virtue I have lost: I have

now learned how indispensable it is to the order God has established for mankind, how necessary it is to the happiness of that state which you have proposed to me. I am not vicious — but I find that I have committed a crime that destroys one of the peculiar distinctions which the Almighty has been pleased to bestow upon mankind, — LOVE — parental and conjugal love. What crime can be greater? what more deserve the shame that attends it?

Far from wishing to defend myself, my dear father, I am overburdened with shame. I shall be known for a lost creature. I shall be talked of and pointed at as a wicked creature. I shall break your heart, my dear father. — Oh! I am so ashamed I cannot see you again. I never, never, can.

After this confession, you may perhaps expect me to mention the person who is the cause of my unhappy state. — Oh! that I could prevail upon you not even to guess who it is. I do think he was

as little aware as myself of the crime we were committing: — why involve him, then? And even if he was aware of it — oh! let him escape, to repent and be happy. His feelings, I fear, will betray him to you: if so, say to him, if he lives and repents, I forgive him.

And now, my dear father, comes the request I am going to make: — patience and submission: — your excellent nature is meek, resigned, and forgiving: exert it now, for my sake, I implore you. I know my shame would break your heart, but recollect that God is not the world — recollect that he will forgive it, and that the world knows nothing of it. He will forgive it for my sorrow, and for our Saviour's sake; and let it comfort you to think that when I die you will have a child in Heaven. Shame will in this manner be avoided, if the world continues to know nothing of it: — strengthen your heart then, my dear father, certain that it is known only to God, yourself, and one other person besides, who will not discover it for his own sake, and

who has too good a heart to injure the reputation of a poor girl.

I hope your heart is now strengthened, is now prepared for the conclusion of my letter. I have prayed fervently to God to enable me to state these things in such a manner to you as to strengthen, as to prepare you for knowing that it is his gracious will to take me away from shame, and that when you read this He will have removed me to Heaven through the mediation of our Saviour. Now, now, be careful, I beseech you, or I shall still be your shame, and your heart will yet be broken. Oh! Sir! Oh! my father! love me still — and for my sake let my —— let it be attributed to the sudden return of the convulsions I had yesterday. You must, I know, be unhappy, but not so unhappy as you would have been to see me in shame; reflect on this; it is the less evil — reflect too that I am removed by the God of mercy from a state of misery to one of bliss. And be assured, my dear father, that, if I could persuade myself you would bear this unexpected blow as I wish, the tears I have

shed in taking my resolution would not now dim my eyes as I write, and I should be happy. Reflect, too, that I may see you in the state into which I am going, and that your resignation may augment my happiness there: — reflect that I shall be with my dear mother, and with her I will pray to be allowed to be your guardian angel. Think that I am so, as you read this, and you will not have lost

Your affectionate, your now happy

MATILDA.

*Harvey's Letter to Delmont.*

Sir,

I have neither strength of body nor power of mind sufficient to write such a letter as ought to accompany the inclosed. I give it to you with a sincere hope, that it may have a proper effect upon you, not from a desire to punish you. That you are the person alluded to in it there cannot be a doubt. You are at the commencement of life, and consequently too young to lose hope of excellence of every kind. If the reflection which the letter ought to inspire leads you to devote the years before you to the service of God and your fellow-creatures, this first fatal error will be completely wiped away.

I do not mean to write you a lecture: — Nature has endowed you with superior faculties: — You have but to make a proper use of those to attain all that is

desirable on earth, and the approbation of your Maker; for, notwithstanding the fatal effects to me of the crime you have committed, you are still but a boy, and your pardon is already prepared in Heaven, as well as granted on earth. What I chiefly write to you for is to make an observation respecting the last mistaken action of my dear child. She was naturally a sensible creature, but her conduct, both with respect to you and the dreadful means she took to escape from *shame*, proves that nature, even the best, is not to be trusted to itself—that it ought to be instructed and put under the guidance of Religion. My error was a too great reliance on her evident good sense and virtuous disposition, and a fear of rendering her less innocent by premature knowledge. I have paid dearly for my error, nor can I well trace this dispensation of Providence as to its termination in this world; and it therefore confirms my belief that there is another. It may, too, have some unknown connection and influence on the part assigned to you, in

the existence you have received, and but lately received. — Whatever it be, His will be done!

But I was going to make an observation on the last action of my child.— I should indeed be miserable did I not firmly believe, were I not sure, that she was as ignorant of the last crime she committed as of the first. Had she been taught to consider life as only bestowed upon her for the purpose of preparing a spirit for a higher sphere, and not to be terminated according to the influence of her feelings, she would never have quitted her duty. She would rather have borne even shame; and she would have laboured properly to retrieve the favour of God and man, and I would have helped her. But she erred, and I am comforted by an inward conviction that she has received mercy for this error too, and that she is, as she says, in Heaven.

And now, Sir, may God forgive you, and may your future actions in life render you worthy of his favour!

ROBERT HARVEY.

*The First Day.*

"Let him escape, repent, and be happy!" said Delmont, repeating the words in Matilda's letter, as he looked at the beautiful china-cup in his hand, which he had brought away with him from Harvey's house. "Let me see," continued he, "let him escape, repent, and be happy:" would it not be better to escape altogether, than escape to repent? yes, it shall be so: — there is no escape for me, except from life: — Matilda has escaped. Death — death is the establisher of peace: — the grave is the sanctuary of peace; and thou," he added, addressing the cup, "art the lovely, inviting vehicle of peace."

These effusions of a perturbed spirit broke from Delmont's lips the morning after he had removed to his new apartment, while lingering alone at the breakfast-table, having just drank his tea out of the cup which he had fatally handed to Matilda. He had read the letters Harvey had put into his hands, with a

different spirit from that which Harvey supposed they would produce. The common remarks of a superstitious man and uninformed girl, which they contained, could make little impression on the invigorated understanding of one who had now begun to reason like a man; but the images they raised called forth in him the most tempestuous passions of the human breast. Matilda in convulsions, Matilda taking the poison from his hand, Matilda dead in the room where he had intruded himself, Matilda in her coffin, were the recurring visions of his brain; and at other times he thought of Harvey reading the letter, bending over the lifeless body of his daughter, eyeing him with his fixed intelligible gaze; he thought of his clayey hand, his ghastly smile, his spectre-gliding form, and, worst of all, of the resignation, the meekness, the forgiveness which his sunken cheeks and pale lips had seemed to force horribly upon him. His distracted imagination allowed him no breathing time, asleep or awake his existence was agony, and he was resolved to get rid of it. "To-

morrow it ends," said he: "to-morrow will I share the repose of Matilda."

Having prepared himself for the execution of his design, he took his breakfast as usual with his tutor. This was the day he had fixed upon for annihilating all sensation, and he called it the *first* day of repose. Again alone, he took the destined vial from his pocket, and poured the contents into Matilda's cup; then drank it off, with a laugh, repeating the paraphrase of a sentiment in Sophocles:

"Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
And know, whatever thou hast been,
'Tis something better not to be."

Delmont was missing at the school — his tutor came to his apartment to enquire for him, and was informed that he complained of a head-ach, and was gone to lie down. Satisfied with this, he returned to his business. Delmont was missing at the dinner hour: his tutor went to his chamber, and found him in his bed asleep; he strove to wake him, and could not. . . . . .

Not knowing what to think, uneasy at the fruitlessness of his efforts, and not without a rising fear from his late observations on his pupil, he hastened to a druggist by whom he was occasionally served with medicine, and asked if Delmont had been there. The druggist took him into his parlour.

"Sir," said he, "there is something extraordinary in this young gentleman's deportment: my men have for some time been talking together of his appearance, and of his muttering to himself as he walks along; besides there are odd stories going about respecting Harvey and his daughter; you had better be upon your guard."

"Gracious Heaven!" cried Delmont's tutor, "can he have poisoned himself?"

"I am sure," said the druggist, "that he meant to do it, but for the present you may be easy: —he asked for a vial of laudanum for you: —had not my suspicion been previously raised, I might have given it—but what I gave him will prove only a strong opiate:—he will sleep for many hours—perhaps till to-morrow

morning, but you had better be with him at the time of his waking."

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*The Second Day.*

The lecture was given with impressive kindness, and heard with due submission. Delmont, who always spoke with respect and regard to his tutor, owned that he was very unhappy, but owned no more. His tutor, finding that he could no longer be responsible for his charge, secretly determined to write without delay to Delmont's mother; and Delmont, finding his agony encreased by the detection of his purpose, secretly determined to persist in his resolution not to live.

"Well," said he to Matilda's cup, on the *second* day, "you have deceived me, I will trust to you no more: — had you been as unfaithful to your mistress, I might have been less miserable. They think they have foiled me: they have only

thwarted me:—there are other aids to peace; and this then shall be the *first* day of repose."

He started from his chair, left the house, passed the Gothic building where he should have joined the other scholars, crossed the bridge that led to the castle, and was soon upon the terrace of it, the parapet of which surmounted a wall built at the edge of a rocky precipice of immeasurable depth.

"Who shall foil me now?" cried he, as he approached the parapet. He placed his hand upon it;—he looked over the steep; he turned and looked round him; he saw no creature stirring; a dead silence reigned:

"Now, who shall foil me? Now, if there be a God, let him show himself; let him foil the being who defies him."—He again placed his hand upon the parapet ——

* * * * There are, in the progress of time and coincidence of circumstances, accidents perpetually happening that in themselves are nothing, but which in combination with peculiar facts produce effects,

which, however evidently arising from chance, the vulgar and the superstitious ascribe to what they call Providence. — Now, placed as Delmont was, a precipice before him, his hand upon the parapet, no creature nigh to prevent his leap, denying and defying God to foil his purpose — what was to postpone his fate? — Chance, the merest chance: — an unperceived iron-claw which stuck in the wall caught his foot as he made the spring that was to render that day the *first* of his repose: — he sprang with such violence, that the re-action tripped him up; and he fell backwards upon his head, which, struck against a large stone, and he was stunned, and lay stretched on the ground, as senseless as he would have been had he plunged to the depth on the other side of the parapet. Coming to himself, he was extremely surprised to feel a hand examining whether he was materially hurt or not. It was the centinel, who, unseen in his box, had observed all Delmont's motions: — he roused him, and, having got him upon his legs, conducted him by the arm to the steps of the ter-

race, where he told him to go about his business, and not to come there again.

As he walked towards the bridge, he met his tutor, who joined him, having been informed by one of the boys that he had passed the school, and was gone towards the castle. He left him no more that day by himself, and when they parted at night, he hoped that his reasoning and kindness throughout the day had had their intended effect upon his pupil.

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*The Third Day.*

"'Tis odd!" said Delmont, as he again contemplated the beautiful gift which he had made to Matilda, in their days of childish ignorance and peace. — "Thy mistress's father would say: 'God is good: — his providence has saved you twice;' and his daughter would add 'live, repent, and be happy.'—Tell me, Matilda, how: — rise from your grave, but for a

moment, and tell me how. Repent I do, — if sorrow for your fate, if remorse for the part I had in it, be repentance: but life! but happiness! — tell me how I can endure the one, or ever hope the other. Life and happiness are incongruous terms: — life is the soil of misery; — happiness is a fancy-coined phrase to signify the visions of insanity: — misery is real; happiness imaginary: — the happy are madmen peeping at raree-shows: — the man in his senses sees things as they are, and knows that chance has thrown together combustible atoms into his shape, damned with sensation, flaming occasionally, and left to burn out of themselves in time. — And what is wisdom but the art of allaying the torture of the aggregated fire? Then what is the height of wisdom? Resolution to extinguish it at once."

Delmont kissed the cup: — the kiss excited a recollected tenderness: — tears made their way to his eyes: — some fell in.

"Oh! I would fill thee full of them," cried he; "and drink them afterwards, could they recall Matilda. — Recall!"

exclaimed he, recollecting himself; "recall her from everlasting peace to the hell of existence! No, Matilda, sleep on. Delmont shall sleep to-day: — this is the *first* day of his repose."

When Delmont mused thus, he had not fully decided on the means of accomplishing his inflexible purpose. He was still prepossessed with the idea of throwing his congregated atoms into the air, to be again at the disposal of chance. He bent his steps towards the bridge which led to the castle; but, as he came in sight of the Gothic building, he caught a glimpse of Ruffhead coming out. He turned down a narrow lane to avoid him. Absorbed in his thoughts, he continued the path; — he passed over a green, and found himself standing on the bank of the river, the castle before him. He viewed with wonder the height from which he would have fallen. He stood some minutes reflecting on the repeated accidents which had hitherto frustrated his seemingly unpreventable design.

"What would Harvey with his Providence say now? Is it Providence that

guides my steps to the friendly element which smiles at me, and ensures my repose? How deep and placid does it move along! Smooth as love, silent as time! How cool it looks! Chance, that composed me of burning matter, has led me here to quench the fire, and thus —" He plunged forward.

"What's that?" cried he, amazed and agitated, as he fell backwards into the arms of Ruffhead.

"Hollo! Delmont! What the devil are you about? Are you going to drown yourself?" exclaimed his school-fellow, as he pulled him backwards by the coat.

Ruffhead had perceived Delmont turn down the lane, and had no doubt that he did it to avoid him.

"Come," said he to one of his cronies, "let us follow him, and force him to come among us."

They hastened after him; — he had got to the green before they were near enough to speak to him. His folded arms and pensive gait at first amused them; and they agreed by signs to creep

close to him unheard, and to surprise him. Ruffhead was at his back, and was wantonly disposed to push him into the river, but was restrained by recollecting its depth at that spot. He had no idea that chance had sent him there to drag his companion back to loathed life.

* * * * * * * * *

Thrice had the premeditated eternal repose of Delmont been averted by the evident effects of chance; — but so close, and in such order, one after the other, that he was free to own that such a succession of accidents towards the same point was extraordinary; and he then recollected a fourth attempt to rid himself of agony, though, more actuated by passion, and less unaccountable than the others — that which Harvey's dying hand had foiled.

"But what are three or four extraordinary incidents compared to the surprizing combinations and infinity of concomitances necessary to innumerable produc-

tions of chance! To say nothing of the world and its physical attractions and cohesions, its affinities, its repellants, and seminal properties, is there a condition or character in what is called the moral state of things, that does not require an association and a succession of accidents to make it what it is? Great statesmen, great generals, great scholars, kings, rulers, nay, in the petty affairs of a people, the underlings of society, all to take their places, must owe them to a variety of circumstances, tending to one point. Why then wonder that the pistol, the poison, the precipice, and the stream were concurrent to the effect of a man's remaining in life after three impotent essays to die, made in three successive days? Chance, indeed, though it can have no meaning, is a most powerful agent. Who knows what it may produce in me? It seems, however, blindly operating my continuance in life. I will take Ruffhead's advice; I will live, and, instead of seeking oblivion in death, I will find it in revelry: —my senses shall be no more the vehicles of agony but of plea-

sure:—imagination shall combine its airy creations for my sport. I will plunge into the crowd, and be a happy worldling. Chance will have it so."

This was the soliloquy of Delmont in the evening of the third day, which was spent in company with his new friends, whose acute philosophical discussions, gaiety, and wit, dissipated the gloom which had presented to his imagination death as the only resource worthy of thought. The next morning he put Matilda's cup aside in a place of safety, and drank his tea from a common bason: he spoke in a livelier tone to his tutor; and after the school business he sought his companions of his own accord. But neither Ruffhead nor any of the others with whom he now mixed, were really congenial with him. Amid their scenes of gaiety, hours were constantly recurring replete with bitter reflection, which he had no one to participate and to soothe.

* * * * * *

Delmont was now at the university.

There was a struggle in his nature; for it was originally soft and indulgent, and he was no contemner of the understanding of women; but, as he advanced in years, he found men selfish and deceitful, women vain and foolish: — the one became objects of hatred, the other of mockery and levity — yet there was always a struggle in his heart between his natural and his acquired feelings. He was not wholly a misanthrope — he here and there thought he got glimpses of virtue in men: in women he found nothing to respect; he considered them as neither bad nor good, but fulfilling their destinies: he was pleased with their smiles and their beauty, and he cared not for their fame, because it was all that they cared for themselves; and in general he acted lightly towards them. He hated society, yet at times associated with the light and careless. But growing tired of folly, and impelled, half by nature, and half by dint of study, he formed to himself a system, which ever after chained him to life: — he lived to soften the rigour

of poverty, and to house content in the cottages of his dependents. He felt by it some relaxation of agony — he could not call it happiness — but it gave to life sufficient value to determine him to remain in it. *

With pleasure and love, such as are called so by the world, he was soon satiated — but it was neither pleasure nor love. Real pleasure he never felt after the horrors of Matilda's death ; and love, such as he conceived might exist, if men and women were worthy of it, he never knew. Yet he loved Matilda sweetly and purely ; but that love was a pleasantness of intercourse — it wanted that fulness of the heart which contemplated excellence might give. He sometimes employed his imagination in the formation of a woman to whom he could devote himself ; but he had never met with her, and knew he never should.

Affectionate remembrance and remorse still accompanied the thought of Matilda and of Harvey — they never could be wiped away. Some other painful events,

tragedies too, but not deep ones, remained upon his mind. He never sought to injure, and he believed, the mournful fate of Matilda and her father excepted, he never did. The world misunderstood his character.

"Be it so," said Delmont; "I wish not amity with the world. I fain would be at peace with myself—but how? Had I plunged into the river there would have been an end: old horrors would not have haunted me; and new follies would not have accumulated on my head; but the foul stream into which I plunged has borne me along, living, amidst horrors old and new; and I know not which is most hateful to me, the world or myself."

Delmont found that revelry and folly were not oblivious antidotes. After a year or two he retired from them, and sought his relief in books, and in the system he had formed. Leisure and fancy prompted him to raise a monument to Remorse and Sorrow in a little grove on one of his estates. It consists

of a simple urn upon a pedestal: the pedestal contains a metal box; and in the box are deposited a silver plate inscribed MATILDA, the fatal cup, and this story.

## OBSERVATIONS

*Added to the foregoing Manuscript eight years after it was written.*

I HAVE at length had courage to re-peruse this memorial. The agony the reading has cost me cannot be conceived :— to be felt, the person who reads must have been implicated in the same circumstances, and be similarly organized to the unhappy writer of it. I shudder and wonder alternately. I shudder at the events — I wonder at myself — I wonder infinitely more at the goodness of God. Were he a God of passion, should I not have been dashed to pieces, and my soul given over to the tormentor? Were he not a God of Love, should I have been reserved for hope in the glad tidings of peace? I shudder and repent—I wonder and adore. His ways are inscrutable on earth, yet so

plain are some of them, that it is only a monstrous pride that demands a knowledge of all to confirm submission to any.

In the observations I am going to make, I mean not the slightest apology for myself.

Though I do not always see the hand of Providence in the events of life, I have now been endeavouring to trace it in the death of the father and the child, and the preservation of the being whose conduct caused it. Were there no life after this, the attempt would be in vain. Shocking facts, inconsistent with goodness, would alone present themselves, and it would again lead to the horrid conclusion, that there was no God. There *is* another life. Never were spirits riper for heaven than that father and his child:—to the eye of Omniscience it might have appeared a pity to leave them longer on earth: the unhappy being who was caught in the trammels of vice was to be saved, and the spirit of darkness was to be foiled. By extraordinary death horror was impressed upon his soul, and the temptations to self-murder were rendered abor-

tive by guardian angels. The impiety insinuated into his soul, in contemplating the apparently unjust affliction of a parent by the undeserved loss of an innocent daughter, was to be overcome by the apparently casual restoration of a virtuous and lovely daughter to her father. While his soul glowed at that act to which he was unconsciously led by Providence, her noble spirit, animating an impressive form, such as angels may be thought to assume, influenced it to seek God and redemption. He sought and found. — Never was there a sincerer penitent; — and hope, and faith, and charity are planted in his heart. In this manner have I traced the hand of Providence. Without another life there can be no God; without God all is confusion: — with a God, immortality follows, and all is order.

When this memorial was written, the writer was still under age, and in a deplorable state of impiety: — this is but too obvious in his style, and inconsiderate remarks. Ashamed of these he would obliterate them, but he does not wish to hide from his friends the state from

which they have extricated him. The more he was entangled in the snares of the enemy of mankind, the greater is his obligation to *his Preserver*, who led him to a Saviour, and the more unbounded his gratitude.

## LETTER LXVII.

*Sir Francis Darrell to Miss Saville.*

The pen is in my hand to address my benefactress, yet am I afraid to trust it, for I strive in vain to command my thoughts. When you read this, my dear Miss Saville, the cause of the wretched life your friend has led will no longer be a mystery to you. You will see that he has not abhorred himself without reason; and perhaps you will abhor him too. Should it be so, I will not deny the justice of your feeling; but it will be more than I can bear; and I fear that all the strength of virtue and of religion, which you have been the means of my obtaining, will not support me against the shock my nerves have received from the terrible retrospection I have taken, and the dread of the effect

which the disclosure I am making will produce on your mind.

Do not ask me, why then I make it. The loss of your esteem would be fresh torture to my soul; but the possession of it wrings my heart, which looks into itself as you should look, and sees as you might see. Esteem and vice are incompatible: — crime is the poison of love. Contemptible must be that spirit which can enjoy the love and esteem that would not be bestowed upon him were he known. This is a strong feeling of my nature, and you now see why I have hated the world, and why I have avoided you, and the friends you have given me, — for kindness was more intolerable than seclusion. You now see why I mixed more with the inconsiderate and weak; — they had no esteem to give; — they led the life of butterflies, and I was at times ready enough to laugh at them: — hence my character, hence my indifference to reputation. Could I have foreseen that event of my life which brought me acquainted with you, and its consequences, character would have

been dear to me, as it is now; and though I could not have obliterated the past, I would have made provision for the future. Most certain it is, that since I have known you, I have been inexpressibly anxious to deserve your esteem; and perhaps you will therefore think some portion of it not unmerited; — that thought is a cordial, or will be so when you confirm it. Should I be so happy, you will not refuse me the request I am going to make.

With a blot of so deep a nature on my life, I dare not, I must not, entertain the thought of earthly happiness. I cannot hope for love. The woman from whom happiness might flow cannot but be unattainable by me: — her heart might be led to pity, and I might even force her esteem in future, but she can never love me. I am so convinced of this that, although your cousins have given me a view of what happiness there is on earth in the marriage of congenial minds, I have resolved to forego all thought of it. As I shall never marry then, I have figured to myself an allevi-

ation of my misfortune, or rather of my just punishment. My mind has never been equal to my fortune: — I have spent little, and I am burthened with useless wealth. I cannot enjoy it, and to bestow it indiscriminately, is but weakness. It ought to be dispersed, it ought not to lie hoarded; — to whom can I better look for the disposal of it than one who has rendered me such unspeakable service, who so well understands the use of it? I beseech you not to refuse me this consolation. By my friend Vernon, I have sent a deed of gift to Mr. Saville and your cousin, which makes you mistress of a considerable income, and of the disposal of the whole principal sum. I have entreated them to use their influence with you not to deny me. He brings also a full power from me for the immediate transfer of the funds, and he has promised me, if you will permit him to speak upon the subject, to endeavour to obviate any objection your delicacy may raise. I will therefore confine myself to one. The sentiment on which the rejection of gifts by ladies is founded, I

think a just one. But this is a very different case, and in fact the very reverse of the one on which that sentiment rests: the gift is retrospective, it is an act of gratitude, and wholly unaccompanied with a pretension, or a hope that might render it a case of delicacy. Your acceptance of it is but to alleviate the misery of a heart which dares not aspire to happiness.

Once more, I most earnestly entreat you not to refuse me the only favour I shall ever ask. It will be a blessing to me, one I trust that Heaven will confirm; and to Heaven shall my prayers be offered for you. I will add but one word more. If after a while, if after the first shock the perusal of my story will give to your feelings, it is possible for you to soften your opinion, to mitigate the sentence I deserve, it would be worth to me even more than your acceptance of my gift. Nothing earthly can equal the torment of being abhorred by one we love. — Oh! if possible, do not abhor me!

FRANCIS DARRELL.

## LETTER LXVIII.

*Mr. Vernon to Sir Francis Darrell.*

Piccadilly.

MY DEAR DARRELL,

I WILL not keep you in suspense; but, as you are a man and a Christian, I call upon you to exert yourself in a manner worthy of the cause you have embraced. Support your spirits in this moment of trial, and it will perhaps be the last severe one you will be put to. This probably depends upon your conduct under it.

Though I write, I have it not in my power to say much on the circumstances which hastened my return to town. I will begin by giving you the comfort of knowing that Godfrey and Mr. Saville are your unalterable friends; so I think is Mrs. Godfrey, but she is silent: Miss Saville I have not seen. Do not now

lose your senses because I have not seen her: — I augur favourably from it, and am the more convinced by it that I am not wrong in the judgment I have formed. You must not expect her to answer your letter, at least just now. Godfrey is going to write to you, but circumstances prevent his doing it immediately.

Of course you are prepared, my dear Darrell, to hear that your friends were greatly affected by your story. I read it myself to Mr. Saville and Godfrey: — the latter shed tears; the former cried like a child; and my tears again were mixed with theirs.

"There never was a more melancholy entrance into life," said Godfrey, as he wiped away the tears that continued to stream down his cheeks.

"Dreadful!" said Mr. Saville, as soon as he could speak — "to me most dreadful! It has brought his father to my mind with a train of agonizing recollections."

Godfrey, on hearing this, recovered himself, and entreated his uncle not to yield to such thoughts.

"Oh!" said Saville, "they are past; —I have out-lived their bitterness, George:—the pangs I now feel are great, but I should be happy still if I could persuade myself that this were not a hopeless case. Vernon," continued he, "I will ingenuously own to you, that had Sir Francis's declaration of loving my daughter been made unaccompanied by this sad tale, it would have given me a pleasure beyond any other event in life."

"The circumstances," said Godfrey, "are truly melancholy in themselves; but it is evident that he has, in the bitterness of his heart, taken pains to place them in the most striking and awful light. I do not think the case hopeless."

"Augusta," said Saville, "however grateful her nature, and even prepossessed in favour of Sir Francis, will, I fear, not think as you do."

"Vernon," said Godfrey, "you need not be told how favourable our sentiments are towards Sir Francis, but I think we must consider his letters well

before we act upon them. Allowing all that is due to his generous nature, it is evident that in this immense gift, he is actuated by love, though attended by despair. In that point of view can my cousin accept of it?"

"She will not listen to it for a moment," said Saville.

"Poor fellow," said I, "it will break his heart — it is the ultimate object of his love, the only one. He has not the slightest idea that Miss Saville will hear of him as a lover, and he has proposed this gift as a means of reconciling himself to the lot on earth which he thinks he merits. May I engage you both not to oppose it?"

"My dear Vernon," said Saville, "reflect upon what you ask. If a woman can accept such a gift from a man, standing in the situation Sir Francis does, she may with equal propriety take into consideration whether she may admit the thought of him as a lover. If you were to ask me not to oppose the latter consideration, I should candidly say that I would not; for, sad as his story is, I

think he has atoned — but, in saying this, I do not mean to encourage the idea, for women, my friend, think differently from us on these subjects."

"Augusta," said Godfrey, "has very delicate opinions I know, but she has also a fund of good sense which will enable her to discriminate between wickedness inherent in the spirit, and a wicked action resulting inconsiderately from the instruction and example of a corrupt associate. — If nothing else opposed it, I am of opinion, that, upon reflection, she would sooner consent to hear of Sir Francis as a lover than to accept the gift."

"Would to Heaven!" cried I, "I could report such a decision to my friend!"

"Softly," said Godfrey; "I said if nothing else opposed it. — I do not mean to raise an idea that my cousin would be ready to admit of his addresses, even were this unhappy story removed altogether. — She has peculiar notions on Religion."

"Oh! that that were all!" rejoined

I: "then you will let her see the manuscript?"

"I do not see how we can do otherwise," said Mr. Saville: "we are in the habits of unbounded confidence. We must first prepare her and my niece; and then we will leave the papers with them to peruse by themselves."

"There is another person," said Godfrey, "to whom I wish I could show these papers — a person extremely interested in the happiness of Sir Francis, and whose sentiments would have great weight — I mean the bishop of * *."

I took upon me to say that I was sure you would readily consent.—He said that, as I thought so, if you did not forbid it, he would take an opportunity in a few days to speak to him on the subject. I am persuaded, my dear Darrell, that you will have no objection; but there is time to make it if you have. Therefore should you not write by the return of the post, I shall take your consent for granted, and suffer Godfrey to carry your manuscript to the Bishop. As I told him that I should write to you, immediately, he

desired me to present his best regards and say that he would write to you soon.

Our meeting and conversation took place yesterday, but too late for me to write. — I called this morning: neither Godfrey nor Saville was at home. I begged to see the ladies, and Mrs. Godfrey came to me. I was with her alone for a few minutes. I wish you could have looked into my heart—but this is not a time to talk of myself: I will take a better opportunity to acknowledge my obligations to you; yet I will say that my feelings were such as would gratify yours. I told her that I particularly wished to see her cousin. She said that she could not see me then; on which I endeavoured to draw their sentiments from her. I hoped, I said, that she would excuse my anxiety on a subject in which your comfort was so much involved.

"It is a very painful subject," she replied, "and certainly not one for me to discuss."

I thought she alluded to the manuscript, and I therefore said—

"Darrell's only comfort depends upon your cousin's acceptance."

She stopped me.

"I cannot speak to you on this subject at all, Mr. Vernon," said she, with a countenance evidently of sorrow, "and I will frankly tell you, that I wish at present to return to my cousin, whom I have just left."

"I will not detain you," replied I, "but pray, pray let compassion mingle with your other feelings; and let your amiable cousin keep in mind that he was a boy, that he is a man; that he was an infidel, that he is a Christian. Let her peruse and re-peruse the traces of Providence in his few additional observations to his manuscript."

"I cannot but feel for him," said she, "and you may tell him so."

I walked to the door with her, and came away as she went up the stairs.

Although, my dear Darrell, I have been able to communicate nothing from Miss Saville herself, I think that what I have said ought to comfort you. I rely

upon your supporting yourself with firmness. Tell me so by the next, and I will write again.

Ever yours,

L. VERNON.

# LETTER LXIX.

*Sir Francis Darrell to Mr. Vernon.*

MY DEAR VERNON,

A THOUSAND thanks for your letter.—Mr. Saville and Mr. Godfrey are worthy, kind-hearted men; but I am a fool or a madman, thus idiotically to have cut myself off from the little happiness which circumstances, the most unexpected, the most extraordinary, the most providential, had at length created for me. Not content with regard and esteem, I must, forsooth, be finely sentimental, and refuse them, unless I had them for my crimes and all. Was there ever such idiotism? Why did you let me do it? Could not you have seen that I was under the dominion of passion, and that I

was destroying the little, but exquisite particle of bliss that I had been permitted to find on the earth? I might have gone on enjoying for years the smiles of kindness, the sweet offices of friendship, had I not been the dupe of a coxcomical morality that could not be content with the secret communion of the heart with the omniscient confessor, the omnipotent absolver.—Oh! fool! fool! To think that I should ever after hold a place in the esteem of such beings as Miss Saville and Mrs. Godfrey! Tell me not of men.—Women like them are a degree between us and angels. The best of men want that pure delicacy of feeling which they possess. I am not ungrateful to Saville and to Godfrey, but even they, good as they are, want that refinement which raises an Augusta and a Caroline above our sex. They require not that freedom from corruption which angels do. Mrs. Godfrey pities, so I am sure does her cousin. She can forgive, so can her cousin; but is it not clear that esteem, regard, and intercourse of soul are at an end? If the Bishop can undo

what I have done, and only reinstate me where I was a week ago, let him have all my horrors to contemplate.

Oh! pardon me, my dear Vernon — you know not how ill I am. — Since you left me, I have scarcely slept. — I believe I deceived myself in thinking that there was not a hope lurking at the bottom of my heart — If there was, it is now crushed. — Miss Saville's refusal to see you; Mrs. Godfrey's reserve — yes, it is over. — Let me hear from you immediately.

Yours, yours,

F. DARRELL.

## LETTER LXX.

*Mr. Vernon to Sir Francis Darrell.*

MY DEAR DARRELL,

WHAT I have seen you suffer makes me feel very keenly for you, or I should, in my usual style, be inclined to say that it is very clear you are mad, and that I have not a doubt of love being a species of *insania*. For Heaven's sake, my friend, have a little patience, and endeavour to practise as well as profess. And let me tell you that your wishes are in much better train than the acuteness of your reasoning about female *angelism* has placed them.

Rather than let you go mad on imaginary grounds, I will tell you the reason Miss Saville has not seen me, trusting

to your common sense, to give nothing but a common meaning to what I tell you. The fact is, she has been ill, and is not yet sufficiently recovered to see me — but she sends you a message, and such a one as ought to set your perturbed spirit at rest. — She bids you be of good cheer, and does not abruptly refuse your gift, but will reason with you upon it when she is better. If this does not tranquillize you, I know not what will. — I beseech you, Darrell, to be rational, and not suffer such ebullitions of passion to torture and distract you. — Shall I come to you, or stay in town to communicate my observations?

You at length suspect that something of hope has been lurking at the bottom of your heart. — I give you joy — cherish it — the discovery at this crisis is an omen of joy. — If that does not content you, see a still more propitious one in the illness of your lovely mistress. I know not what our friend Godfrey will do with the Bishop; but look upon me

as Pontifex at the court of Love, and take my advice, which is, to think no more about your gift, but to contemplate the hope you have discovered, and let it have its proper agency. I have had an agreeable interview with Godfrey and his wife.—Your history was at first a dreadful shock to the cousins, and it is clear who was the most affected by it. It has given a pang and cost tears, but you have lost no ground:—if Pity be, according to the old saying, the sister of Love, you have gained ground. However, having said enough to allay your fever of *idiotism*, I shall leave Godfrey and Miss Saville to express their own sentiments, after observing to you, that you could not cherish the hope you have discovered, without the disclosure you have made.

Having, I trust, restored you to some degree of tranquillity, I shall conclude this letter with a few words about myself. Let me, my dear Darrell, call your attention to other striking results of the tragedy in which you had so painful a part, and

which may be added to your observations in tracing from it the hand of Providence.

Had those melancholy events not taken place, it is not unlikely that you would have spent your fortune like other young men, who on coming of age have no one to controul them: — the turn those events gave to your mind has been beneficial to thousands. You have despised only the despicable part of society; you have been a guardian angel to the poor. The next result I shall mention is, the restoration of Grove-Park to the Saville family. In gay, thoughtless, luxurious dissipation, it would never have occurred to your mind; you would never have gone in search of Saville; you would never have rescued his daughter from the hands of villains. The last result calls for *my* gratitude. Your late counsels in our correspondence had begun to have some weight upon my mind; they awakened reflection, but they had by no means decided my conduct. It was not till I knew your story, and witnessed your agonies, that I was fully roused, and my eyes opened on the precipice before me.

Good heaven! with what feelings is man endowed! What instruments they are for torture! The rack, and all the engines of bodily pain which the devil has helped man to invent, cannot produce a tythe of the agony I have seen you suffer from remorse and despair. I have endured the pain of wounds — I have seen it endured by common soldiers; I have witnessed amputations, and the flesh trembling beneath the knife; and I see that those are far easier to bear than the acute sensations inflicted by the feelings of the heart. To me life has hitherto offered only pleasure. I have enjoyed the kindness of affection, and the blessings of well constituted nerves; but I have been upon the point of sacrificing these gifts of heaven, which I never before learned to appreciate. I have been thoughtless, I have sinned, I have been sorry, but of remorse I have never had occasion to taste, except, perhaps, at this moment for prospective guilt. This is the result of your story — it shook me to the soul. The consequences of your action were awful, most awful; but in

comparing them with what would have followed mine had I perpetrated it, they lose half their horror: the untimely death of the young and the innocent is very affecting, but is it equal to living misery? Can he who has premeditatedly cut off the happiness of his friend, and destroyed the virtue of his friend's wife, feel less remorse because they live to suffer and be lost on earth? Much I think may be said to calm you, Darrell, and, young as you are, prepare you for the happiness Providence has provided for you; but had I pursued and succeeded in the guilt I meditated, my mind must have been an earthly hell to me; the man is so good, the woman is so virtuous, I cannot bear the thought even of the intention; and when I saw Mrs. Godfrey for the few minutes I mentioned in my last on coming to town, my heart made a solemn though secret atonement to her; and I was conscious of feeling an affection for her which I once wished might be similar to that I feel for my admirable sister. This, my dear Darrell, is to me not the least valuable of the providential

results of those events, which you must now consider as permitted for their consequences, and which there is therefore reason to believe were in themselves mercies to those who were taken into another world. And let me ask you, would you not rather be the inconsiderate cause of those awful occurrences than the villain I intended to be? Come, let us both recover ourselves; we have fortunately been brought to our senses in time. For the future I will think more, but still I say, let us think cheerfully. You must revive, you must live, and love. It is evidently the will of Providence. I will do so too; the two first I shall find easy, the last I will endeavour to do — out of the Vortex.

Alas! the Vortex! They certainly form the mass which you did not know how to dispose of till the Bishop of * * convinced you that they were in very good hands. They ought not, however, to be given up entirely. I am of Lady Mount-Vernon's opinion, that till they throw themselves into the irremediable gulf, they should be invited and allured

from it by example and kindness. With this spirit, and with no other, will I in future mix with the Vortex.

For the present, adieu! Be composed, and send me a line or two to say you are so; but torment not your pen with imaginary evils, I beseech you.

Ever yours,

L. VERNON.

## LETTER LXXI.

*Sir Francis Darrell to Mr. Vernon.*

MY DEAR VERNON,

I THANK you for your very kind letter. — I am better. — By no means think of leaving town, but write to me by every post. Though better, I cannot be easy, till I have more particular accounts of Miss Saville; in fact, till you have conversed with her. You are sure SHE desired me *to be of good cheer*, and talked of reasoning with me? Remember, my friend, that I must not be treated like a child. Attempt not to deceive me into bearing. I will be patient, but I must see things as they are. I will not magnify her illness, but tell me precisely the nature of it, and the cause, and how she is when you write.

You are very, very kind — but how can I follow your advice? I fancied that

I detected something like hope in my heart, and you immediately cry "cherish it." How can I cherish what I am afraid to think of? And how can her illness raise hope? Even if it were caused by my story, can horror raise hope? If I could dare to cherish it, it would be from that dear message of cheer. What balm flowed into my heart with that message! I return to my former opinion respecting the disclosure of the events which have been secretly gnawing my heart for eight years past. It was absolutely necessary, and yet it seemed more likely to create despair than hope.—Certainly my heart is lighter for it.

Your additional results of those sad events of my life are a new and pleasant medicine to my soul—particularly the last. I cannot express to you how I was revived by seeing of what important service my misery has been to you. That conquest over yourself, with the reflection that accompanies it, was all that was wanting to make you the most amiable of men in my opinion. Ours is now real friendship. How good has Providence

been to me! *You* shall be cheerful for *me*, if I cannot be cheerful myself. Cheerfulness cannot reside in a breast which hope abandons. — Raise hope in mine. — Cheerfulness was natural to me in my infancy, and will return with hope. — I cannot think or write on other topics. — Let me hear from you every day.

Ever yours,

F. Darrell.

## LETTER LXXII.

*Mr. Godfrey to Sir Francis Darrell.*

Hanover-Square.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You have heard from Vernon how we all felt for you.—To the excess of those feelings I beg you to attribute my not immediately answering your letter. My great desire was to give your wounded spirit substantial relief. I could have written you a sheet of condolence from the sensations the perusal of your manuscript gave me, but condolence was not my intention:—my wish was to close your wounds, which have been kept too long open by the susceptibility of your nature. You know how I love the Bishop of * *; that he has been more than a father to me. His piety is as unaffected as his understanding is en-

larged. The subject of your manuscript is one peculiarly adapted to his consideration; and, with Vernon's concurrence, unopposed by you, I have consulted him upon it. I left it with him a couple of days, and his attention to it has produced a letter from him to yourself. My dear friend, I give you joy. Throw it no longer away. I will not anticipate the Bishop's sentiments, which I am sure you will not suffer to have been written in vain. They have had a most delightful effect upon all your friends in Hanover-Square, and I cannot tell you how I rejoice that you prevailed upon yourself to send us your manuscript.

I will not damp your pleasure by discussing the other subjects of your letter at present. You cannot but know the high place you hold in the estimation of my uncle and cousin, as well as in that of Mrs. Godfrey and myself. I must not, however, hide from you that Miss Saville objected to what the Bishop says relative to her, and at first begged he might be requested to alter it; but, reflecting on the necessity of some notice

being taken of that point, she yielded to our persuasions of allowing the letter to go as it is, accompanied with an explanatory one from herself to you. The subject is one on which my uncle has always resolved to leave her to herself. This letter, of course, contains his sentiments as well as mine. Let me have the pleasure of hearing that your mind has recovered its tone, and believe me to be

Your sincerely attached friend

GEORGE GODFREY.

## LETTER LXXIII.

*From the Bishop of ** to Sir Francis Darrell.*

DEAR SIR,

I HOPED for the pleasure of your acquaintance before you left town, but my friend George Godfrey has accounted for my disappointment, by imputing it to the suddenness of your departure.

I have read your manuscript, and the additional observations lately written; and I think I do myself honour in saying, that I read them with tears. Your excellent remarks on tracing the hand of Providence have anticipated the strongest arguments for the restoration of your peace of mind, after so much suffering, and so complete a repentance. You have been much afflicted, but your affliction has been to good purpose. I have not taken up the pen to give you a lecture

on religion, and to point out to you the double effects of God's judgments, whose punishments lead to happiness, but to soothe your mind as a friend, and to endeavour to restore it to the full enjoyment of its powers in giving earthly happiness. Your sufferings and your repentance have been admitted, and I take upon me as the minister of Him who judges in mercy, to declare that you are fully absolved from the sins of which you have so truly repented. You know it to be the Christian doctrine, that we are invested with power to pronounce absolution upon repentance. You are yourself the best judge of the sincerity of yours; but I am also perfectly convinced of it, and I am sure that I have done no more than my duty in what I have said; I therefore not only entreat, but expect of you to feel yourself restored to the favour of your Maker, and you have my prayers, that you may never more forfeit it.

This language has something ministerial in it; I could not avoid it, for it possesses more strength than any thing

I can say for myself. But man is so formed that he will often derive more comfort from the familiar reasonings of his friend, than from the most solemn official declarations. I will, therefore, add a few friendly observations. The first thing I shall endeavour to do is to remove the excessive horror you have attached to your crime, which scarcely belongs to it. The subsequent events, God knows, are aweful enough only to hear of, and deplorable would it have been, had you at the time reasoned yourself into a conviction, that the want of intention to produce the ulterior mischiefs exonerated you from them; it would have made you completely guilty of them, for it would have shown a ripeness of understanding that ought to have foreseen them. Upon the head of a man they would have rested, and he must have answered for all the consequences of his actions; but this was otherwise with you, who were in your early years of boyhood. You were led astray, and, though it appears you knew you were doing wrong, which constitutes the crime,

you were not aware of the extent of the wrong you were doing. This consideration, undoubtedly, ought to relieve you of the burden of the thought, connected with the serious consequences which ensued. And if to this you add, what you have yourself suggested in your additional observations, the great innocence of the characters, and their ripeness for immortality, I think the continuance of your remorse will be unreasonable and superfluous.

I have read your story not only with sorrow but with wonder. Such repeated repulses of the intended act of suicide could not be casual. You have said they were the acts of guardian angels. Many passages in Scripture countenance and confirm the opinion of such spirits, and I should have no objection to your believing, that your preservation constituted a portion of the happiness of the spirits of those two amiable persons; that they have been appointed to combat with the evil spirit for you; that they led you to the wonderful *restoration* of a *daughter* to her *father*; and that, by the

appointment of Providence, they may lead you to the enjoyment of happiness in this life.

Mr. Godfrey, in confiding your manuscript to me, showed me your letter to him, by which I am made acquainted with the state of your inclinations respecting his cousin. She is good and amiable, and too sensible to suffer the misfortunes of a boy eight years ago to affect her opinion of a man who, I am no flatterer, may be pronounced such a partner for life as she ought to have. I know not her opinion, but I feel interested for you, and for her. You appear to me calculated to make each other happy, and to set an example of religion and virtue to the world. I am aware that she has been brought up in the Roman Catholic persuasion. If she consents to your addresses, you may, and ought to reason with her on this subject. If she cannot be convinced, the difference need not be made an impediment to your union. I am not so rigid as to require an absolute conformity in religious opinions, however much it is to be wished.

This young lady's good sense will, I trust, not suffer the difference of opinion to influence her determination. In this, as in all else, you have the best wishes, and the blessing of,

Dear Sir,

Your sincere friend,

W. * *

## LETTER LXXIV.

*Miss Saville to Sir Francis Darrell.*

How differently, Sir, must I address you now to what I have been accustomed, and to what I wish; — I will, however, endeavour to preserve my claim to your esteem, and to my own, by writing with the utmost candour. I appreciate the understanding and the virtues of Sir Francis Darrell too highly to fear that, in doing this, I shall commit myself. I trust he now knows me sufficiently to need no assurance that, however gratified, however flattered I may be, however allured by the pictures of imagination, I have but one spring for my conduct in life, consisting of principles which have been instilled into my mind from my infancy. Indeed, Sir, I feel myself most honoured in having gained so high a place in your opinion; and could I take

into consideration the very flattering testimony you have thought proper to give of it, I have no doubt that I should esteem it as a source of infinite happiness. I return you my heartfelt thanks, I beg your acceptance of my gratitude and my regard, but I must intreat you to turn your thoughts of happiness into another channel.

The proofs you have given me of your affection have sunk deep into my heart; and my sense of them will be as lasting as life, which I would lay down to serve you; but I should be unworthy of your esteem, and, consequently, should soon lose your love, could I so far forget the superior duty which I have to perform in life, as to suffer my resolution to be overcome by any tempting prospect of happiness, or even to give pleasure to friends whom I love better than myself. I have been told, and even the Bishop of * *'s letter to you testifies, that a difference in religious opinions is not an insurmountable obstacle to such an union as you have honoured me with thinking of. I hope I am not obstinate or presumptuous, but

I cannot be of that opinion. I have always considered congeniality of sentiments, on worldly topics, as necessary in such a union; and, if so, is it not still more requisite on the subject which connects our hopes with heaven? I know not that I shall ever enter into such a union, but I am certain that I never can, without previously endeavouring to accord, on such essential points, with the person to whom it would become my duty to submit my will. If there is an appearance of argument in what I have written, I beg that you will not infer from it, that I wish to be reasoned with. I have expressed the only sentiment I cannot relinquish to my friends; and, bound as I am to you by gratitude and friendship, it was impossible for me to say less to you in support of the part I have taken.

The letter that you did me the honour to write to me by Mr. Vernon had the effect upon me which the feelings expressed in it, and the generosity of your conduct towards me, were calculated to produce; receive my thanks for it, and

permit me to pass in silence what might give you pain. I will only say generally, that, except on the point I have already mentioned, I agree with the Bishop in his admirable distinctions, and in his reasoning. With respect to the magnificent gift you intended me, what can I say? I did mean to convince you that it was not in my power to accept it, but I feel too much to argue upon it. I cannot deny the influence of your whole conduct over my mind: but this I must leave to my friends.

God bless you, Sir! I am proud of your good opinion. I hope to preserve your friendship through life, and shall ever esteem it an honour to be considered by you as

Your grateful friend,

AUGUSTA SAVILLE.

## LETTER LXXV.

*Sir Francis Darrell to the Bishop of **.*

Belmont.

MY LORD,

I SHOULD be the most ungrateful of men were I not to acknowledge the immense obligation I am under to your Lordship, and I beg you to believe that, after Mr. Godfrey communicated to me your letter to him, it was my intention to express my sense of your goodness, both by writing and personally. That this has been delayed so long, I am free to confess, is owing to agitations of mind, which convince me, that I have been more successful in the theory, than in the practice of Christianity. Your friendship, my Lord, is an honour and a blessing, which I should never have aspired to, but I see in it the will of Providence, and I am more thankful for it than I have words to express. It shall be my first duty,

when I am next in London, to come and beg your blessing from your lips, and endeavour to cultivate the friendship which is so generously offered me.

It would perhaps become me, my Lord, to notice particularly the points in both your letters, but I hope you will permit me to say generally, that I was fully struck with the perspicuity of your elucidations. I might dwell upon the reflections which they produced, but the result would only be, that conviction was the consequence, and the reflection would not be new to you; but I will say what I think will please you, that, in future, instead of demanding the submission of all propositions to my understanding, I will distrust and humble my understanding in every important enquiry; by which I do not mean to say, that I will not always use my reason, but that I will not be so proud of it as to imagine that it is unerring, and that I will never again reject, merely because I do not comprehend. But while I say this, I must not leave you to infer, that I at once subscribe completely to all the doc-

trines of the national church, of which nevertheless I trust you will accept me as a member. In spite of the clear manner in which you showed a ground for believing an eternity of misery, I feel a great repugnance to that doctrine — to thinking it consistent with the goodness, or even with the justice of the Almighty.

I will not take upon me to enter upon other less important differences in the present state of my mind — they do not appear to me to be essential points of our religion, or of sufficient weight to cause a separation from the national establishment; for, though I do not conceive any establishment to be a necessary part of Christianity, the spirit of which may influence regions and worlds unknown to us, I think it most desirable that there should be a point of union to which the religious feelings of a whole country may tend, and by which they may be preserved. I think the desire to preserve that union a patriotic sentiment, and that nothing but an essential point should interfere with it.

May I, my Lord, venture here to say,

that the diversities in the various churches do not appear to me to affect the great principles of Christanity, and that a sincere Roman, a sincere Greek, all sincere communities of Christians, are included in the great benefits of that infinitely extensive dispensation of God's goodness. You perhaps suspect, my Lord, to what this last observation tends. The interest which you have expressed in my temporal happiness emboldens me to speak of it to you. The knowledge I have of Miss Saville convinces me that she would be a prize, not only conducive to temporal happiness, but, by her virtues and her piety, to the promotion of immortal prospects. I own to you, that her resolution not to listen to the addresses of a man of a different religious persuasion affects me extremely. I also once resolved never to unite myself with a person of a different faith, but the reasons above stated, now confirmed by your sentiment, have removed all objections to her remaining a Roman Catholic. And I will add, that her firmness and constancy to what she

considers as truth exalt her still more in my opinion. On the other hand, I should be unworthy of her esteem, I should be unworthy of the absolution you have given me, could I, from the excitements of passion, pretend to conviction which I did not feel. In the sincerity of my adopting the national establishment, I have not dissembled to your Lordship the principle that guided me, which involves some diversity of opinion; how then can I say that I accord on doctrines infinitely more repugnant to my feelings, as well as to my reason! I cannot, I never will: — no prize on earth shall tempt me to it. Yet the hope which has sprung up in my breast since your favourable decision on my unhappy story, since the absolution I have received, struggles for a continuance of existence, and I shall make one effort to persuade her that the points of difference in our opinions are not so material as to be imperative upon her to refuse me her hand. I hope I shall not do wrong. — I will go no farther than this; and, in case of failure, I will devote my-

self to a life of celibacy, with a resolution of doing as much good on earth as I can. In this case, I shall beg your advice and assistance. You know that wealth has fallen to my lot in this world — I would fain have the assistance of Miss Saville to put it out to its proper usury, even if she refuses the master of it; but it appears that the delicacy of the female character will oppose this, and I shall therefore consider your aid as one of the proofs of the inestimable friendship which Godfrey has obtained for me.

I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's obliged,

And truly grateful servant,

FRANCIS DARRELL.

## LETTER LXXVI.

*Sir Francis Darrell to Miss Saville.*

I HAD not yet dared to aspire to happiness, when your cousin's cover brought me two letters, one of which crushed hope even before it germed, and the other saved the broken seed and raised it in defiance of the ruin. The former, and the first read, was from Miss Saville, the latter from Godfrey's excellent friend the Bishop of * *. I thought myself unworthy to solicit your hand, but you were too ingenuous to seem ignorant of my heart, and too good to suspend the declaration of your resolve.

Your letter is worthy of the writer; it is such a one as my reflection tells me I might expect from you; and, as I was destitute of pretensions to your favour, I purposed to endeavour to reason myself into an acquiescence with the will

of Heaven. — But how shall I tell you the conflict which the Bishop's has produced in my heart! His decision, his absolution, his blessing, his opinion of you, were like so many divine instruments raising me from a dark cavern into which I had fallen, and restoring a desponding wretch to the glorious light of day. Hope, hitherto unknown to my unhappy bosom, sprung up with a strength that overcame even the blow it had received from you. Oh! Miss Saville, I cannot all at once acquiesce in the resolution of tearing it out of my heart so soon again. You know not how sweet it is to hope — I never knew — I never could have conceived it: — I beseech you to let it rest where it is, if but for a little, even if it must be at last rooted entirely out. — Hitherto I have loved you in silence and with agony — to dare to say it and to hope is a delight I dreamed not of as belonging to human nature. — Now that I know it, will you not think it cruel to deprive me of it at once and immediately? Cruelty is not in your nature; you will at least hear me

before you finally resolve to separate hope from love.

Since the encouragement of my friend has emboldened me, — since the objection you have made rests upon a sentiment which, however pure, however amiable, admits of reasoning, I implore you not to refuse my suit till you have given me a little time to endeavour to obviate it — And I will begin by promising you that I will not now or ever in my life make an attempt to divert you from the principles to which you are attached. My only object shall be to persuade you that you will not be erring from those principles in listening to my suit. I ask but a little time, and permission to inform myself upon the subject, that I may collect all that can be said in my favour. — Grant it, I beseech you — say you will hear me before you pronounce the irrevocable lot of

FRANCIS DARRELL.

## LETTER LXXVII.

*Miss Saville to Sir Francis Darrell.*

Your letter, my dear Sir, has given me much pain. I must repeat that I think it the duty of a woman when she becomes a wife to endeavour to mould her sentiments by those of her husband, and certainly to submit her will to his. With persons of different religious persuasions, marriage becomes a question not more between the parties than between heaven and earth. Being now fully acquainted with my sentiments, you cannot but be aware of the impossibility of my acceding to your wishes while I retain them; and you have been generous enough to promise me to make no attempt to alter my principles. I will therefore not scruple to comply with your request of hearing all that you may imagine sufficiently reasonable to sway

my mind to the change of the sentiment which tells me that there is something more than impropriety in so solemn an engagement between persons of different religions. My compliance, I assure you, arises from my own desire to satisfy you; but I must not dissemble that my father and cousins have also expressed it to be their wish. We propose being at Grove Park during the Easter recess, and we shall have the pleasure of seeing you.

In concluding, let me take the liberty of observing that, in the avowed state of your mind, prudence I think would suggest a different course, but it shall be as you please.

I am,

Your truly grateful friend,

AUGUSTA SAVILLE.

## LETTER LXXVIII.

*Mr. Vernon to Sir Francis Darrell.*

MY DEAR DARRELL,

I AM going out of town merely for the purpose of carrying the Count D'Olivastro away from London. I wish to see you, and shall take him your way; but, as I know you would rather be without company at present, we will spend but one day at Belmont, which he has expressed a very great wish to see. We shall arrive probably the day after to-morrow. I need not tell you that Miss Saville is well.—I know you are in correspondence with her.—Success attend you! In great haste,

Ever yours,

L. VERNON.

# LETTER LXXIX.

*Angelica to Augusta.*

Paris, March 30.

MY DEAR AUGUSTA,

After a very pleasant journey, we are at length arrived at this celebrated metropolis, and here have I found all your dear letters, those directed to Florence as well as the packet addressed here, as far as your interview with Miss Craven. Though tired, I could not go to bed till I had read them all through in succession, as they were written. I shared your various emotions, and was with you and your cousin in all the situations you describe. I could with pleasure go over them again, and write a long letter of my correspondent feelings, but I have Paris to see, my friends, the Dorringtons, to attend to, and my *squirrel* to watch; therefore I shall reserve the expression of

those feelings till I see you, as that will be so soon, and devote the few leisure minutes I have to tell you something of myself and of my companions.

First, let me say that I did not foresee how painful the taking leave of my dear father and mother was to prove, or I think I should not have resolved on taking the journey. Parting is dreadful — I had experienced the pang of it but once before in my life, and that was when you left me. Till the time came, I thought only of meeting you, not of quitting them. The kindness of the Dorringtons, the attentions and good behaviour of my *squirrel*, the sight of the country, and especially the promise my father had given me to be in England this summer, and bring my mother with him, consoled me, and I must say that I have been happy enough.

The Dorringtons are delightful people. — I have great pleasure in thinking that you will know them, as they are friends of your cousin, of whom they speak *con amore*, and as *my* friends too, of whom I shall speak also *con amore*. Miss Dorring-

ton improves both in beauty and amiable manners; but, wonderful to relate, she has not called off our young friend from his sworn attachment to your Angelica, which is to last till I see Mrs. Dartford, and, after that, all the way through this life if I think proper; and he vows he never will love any body else, not even you, whose picture he purloined for a fortnight, and replaced when I beat you out of his heart. What think you of his constancy? In one of your letters, you tell me to look forward and provide myself with the consent of the Marchese and my mother — what will you say to *his* having taken care of that? But more, what will you say to the Marchese having taken me aside, and made the following speech?

"My dear Angelica, you are at a time of life, when young women begin to thing of settling themselves in the world. I am sure you are not in a hurry to be married, but at the same time, I would not have you treat the subject with derision, and refuse offers capriciously — This young man —"

I smiled.

"Nay, don't laugh—he is a fine young man, and in spite of the folly of his being easily captivated, I am persuaded he will make a good husband. His family, his fortune are unexceptionable—he has asked my permission to solicit your hand, and neither your mother nor I have any objection:—indeed, we should be pleased at your accepting him. His fortune would enable him to pass a great deal of his time in this country, and we could go to his occasionally."

I think I see your arch smile, Augusta, as if preparing to hear that I am, or am to be, Mrs. Dartford.—Well I *am not*—but what think you? am I *to be?* I laughed with my father on the occasion, and I neither refused nor consented. I told him that I was certain he would change his mind before he got to England, and that I doubted my power of delivering him safe into his mother's hands.

"Let it depend upon that," said my father; "and if he gains his mother's

consent, and you write to me that he has prevailed upon you to name the wedding day, your mother and I will come to be present."

I promised my father to think of his recommendation, but at the same time owned, that I feared to enter into such an engagement with a man whose inconstancy had been so glaring, and even ridiculous. He has really made himself very agreeable to me, my dear Augusta, and I do not say that, if I could put his constancy to the test, I would reject him. But we shall now be soon together, and we will assist each other.

I pray to Heaven that I may find your heart as light as mine; but I trace something in your later letters that bespeak it otherwise. I will not alarm you, my dearest sister. You possess a heart which has been well trained in obedience to your mind; and, if gratitude should be found going a little beyond its bounds, you will require no great exertion to recall it. I do not much like that monk at the masquerade — he has done you more harm than can arise from your attach-

ment to Sir Francis Darrell. What business has a man under a mask to set about unsettling opinions established time out mind, and which never before disturbed your imagination? I cannot think with you that it was Mr. Godfrey; who has shown too much delicacy to have attempted any *perversion* in disguise. It was probably some man without any object, but that general one among some wits of ridiculing religion. But I hope you have not thought any more upon the subject. As for the mask in the black domino, I have no doubt it was Olivastro. I think Mr. Saville ought to have him taken up and sent out of the country.

Emily Dorrington has been to call me. I must, therefore, finish my letter, as I will not lose a post to let you know that I am here. If you write immediately, I may receive yours. We leave Paris in the end of next week. I have not time to speak of my journey. You are right, we stopped at Avignon — but I must say, it requires enthusiasm of some kind,

poetic or amorous, to give Vaucluse its reputed charms.

Adieu, my dearest, dearest Augusta! give my love to my dear Mr. Saville, and your cousins; and write directly to

Your most affectionate

ANGELICA.

# LETTER LXXX.

*Augusta to Angelica.*

Hanover Square, April 4.

HEAVEN be praised! I want you more than ever, my dearest Angelica, and Heaven be praised, you are come! I say you are come, for I will not stir without you, and, according to Mr. Dorrington's intentions, I may expect to embrace you before the middle of the month.

Oh! my dear sister! I have such a tale to tell you! How little did I foresee, when I dispatched my packet to Paris, what a dreadful story I was so soon to hear of Sir Francis Darrell! How little did I suspect the state into which my mind would be thrown before the

arrival of my sister! Angelica! my dear Angelica! Your sister's peace of mind is lost. Poor man! I no longer wonder that his has been so long lost. I cannot tell you his story: — I strive not to think of it — alas, I strive in vain — but I cannot tell it you: — you must read it as written by himself — or, rather, you had better be ignorant of it altogether. — Oh! that I had never known it! It includes — I cannot mention it. — The shock it gave me made me ill, and I was for several days confined to my room. Caroline felt it nearly as much as I did, and the distress of my father and George was beyond description, but they have all recovered themselves: — it is only your Augusta that continues to suffer, and my heart, Angelica, is in a sad, sad state. I strive to hide my feelings with the hope of saving those I love from pain, but I cannot altogether, and my father and my cousins are unhappy about me: — indeed I am afraid of myself, for I am very, very wretched. They are all against me; and, what is worse, my own heart is against me. — It has betrayed me, Angelica, and the de-

nunciation of that unfortunate woman in her anonymous note is but too true: — it is lost, it is lost, my sister. But fear not, you know me — and it is because you know me, because you know the strength of my soul, that I scruple not to tell you that I no longer impose upon myself; that I am conscious that I love. Some one has called love the sweetest of the passions — it may be — but I know it only as the bitterest. Hope may render it sweet — but to find, that I love a man whom I dare not, must not think of — Oh! Angelica! to what a degraded state am I fallen!

I cannot write at large, my dear sister; but I must devote a few lines to apprize you of the situation in which you will find me. I think I told you that Sir Francis left town to avoid the poor woman who had eloped at the masquerade. On arriving at Belmont he resolved to communicate to us the causes of the unhappy life he had led: — his reason, he said, was, that his conscience told him he was receiving esteem and consi-

deration which could not be bestowed upon him if his story were known; and the thought oppressed him beyond enduring. He owned he was anxious for the friendship he experienced among us, and would deserve it, but he was unknown, and therefore could not enjoy it. You remember, *Angelica*, the urn in the arbour at Grove Park: — the box in the pedestal contained a manuscript written by himself; — it was his own story: — he sent it by Mr. Vernon to my father and George, with letters, in which he declared that he loved me, but hopelessly, and without any intention of courting me. I have told you the effect the manuscript had upon us.

He would probably have adhered to his resolution, had he not consented to let George show his story to the Bishop of * *, which produced a charming, delightful, soothing letter from him to Sir Francis himself, in which he absolves him; and more, encourages him to court me. The Bishop's language, I thank God — I must thank God for it — restored him to a degree of self-consider-

ation: but, alas! it also raised a hope that he might not be thought unworthy of my acceptance. He expressed this hope in a letter to me — a letter calculated to win the most obdurate heart. He had not to encounter obduracy in mine, Angelica, which was but too ready to confirm the Bishop's reasoning as to his unhappy story, the events of which had taken place when he was but a boy. My opposition to his wishes rests on grounds more difficult to be overcome; reasons that I never can make give way to any earthly consideration or affection. I frankly assured him I never would marry any man from whose religious sentiments I was bound by a superior duty to differ. He then urged to be heard, promising that he never would endeavour to persuade me to an alteration of my sentiments, but hoped he might convince me, that thinking differently on religious points ought not to prevent a union of minds otherwise congenial; he entreated for time and a hearing in such affecting terms, and my father and cousins urged me so warmly to comply with this request, that it was

impossible for me to refuse it. I repeated my opinion to him, but said I would see him soon at Grove-Park. Thus, Angelica, am I situated. It will be a great struggle, I own; but I am resolved to conquer. Haste, my sister, to my assistance.

Unhappy as I am, I will not suffer my agitation so to absorb my other feelings as not to participate my dear Angelica's. I know you well, my sister.—I know that your heart will never be swayed by capricious passions. I am sure that if you resolve to accept Mr. Dartford it will be upon mature consideration, and upon a well-founded hope, that he is a good man, and consequently will be a good husband. My dear Marchese would not have spoken in his favour had he not observed and proved the change of his youthful airy disposition. Your mother would never have heard of him as a son. Indeed, I think the prospect good: his mother is a charming woman, and most highly respected in this country. My serious opinion is, that you should encourage the affection in your own

bosom, and let him see that he may gain your heart. — When he finds it too valuable a one to be inconsiderately bestowed, he will feel the attachment it merits, and constancy will be more delightful to him than change. Are the changes he made astonishing? Far from it. The woman that says at the first look, here is my heart for you, you shall have no trouble in proving your self worthy of it, — I will marry you in a fortnight — cannot but be a contemptible being, and Mr. Dartford, with all his eccentricity, has a great fund of good sense and virtue. Then, no such objection as that which has determined my lot in life, opposes hope and happiness. Yes, my dear Angelica, it is hope that renders love sweet. — You will be happy. — Oh! I weep as I say it. — My heart is not so good as I wished it to be — but it is not at your happiness I weep — it is at the rebellion of that heart, so instructed, so fortified, so cherished. — How truly was it said that the heart of man is deceitful above all things. — Does it even not deceive itself? But I *will* conquer it. Though

it has deceived me, it shall never make me blush.

Oh! Angelica! that mask haunts me! and, in spite of the improbability of it, my weak heart tells me that it was Sir Francis Darrell himself who personated that character. The object of his remarks, the gentleness of his manners, and I think now the tones of the voice, when he lowered it, combine to persuade me that it was with him I conversed that night. But this I must observe, that however his remarks may disturb my imagination, the effects were completely unconnected with any idea of their coming from his lips. And if it be true that they came from his lips, those lips can repeat them no more; for he has solemnly promised never to do it, and he has too much honour to break his word. But, nevertheless, come Angelica, come and assist your friend, who is determined to conquer her rebellious heart.

Your affectionate

AUGUSTA.

# LETTER LXXXI.

*Augusta to Caroline.*

Grove-Park, April.

MY DEAR CAROLINE,

I NEEDED not the deep impression of your parting words—"Remember to open your whole heart to me in your letters,"—to feel how truly you are entitled to my confidence. Your love is very dear to me, and I should ill deserve it were I capable of hiding from you the heart in which you have so warm a place. I wish it were more worthy of you,—but I believe you know it better than it knows itself. With respect to you, it has but one pain; it feels that it is debarred by a paramount duty from gratifying the wishes you have formed—but I know you will not love me the less for that.—Indeed I could not be happy

myself, nor make another happy with whom I differed so essentially. You know, my dear Caroline, that with us marriage is not considered as a mere earthly contract, but that it is a holy sacrament. How then can that sacrament be received by persons who have not the same opinion respecting it? The more you reflect, the more you will see the impropriety, to give it the lightest censure, of my encouraging a thought, either in myself or in Sir Francis Darrell, of such an union. You know how grateful I am to him, nor are you ignorant that I should readily endeavour to conquer any other objection to his wishes. But as it would be presumption in me to require a change of sentiment in him, a change too, that could do him no honour if made to gain an earthly object, I am sure you will not think me wrong in persisting in my resolution to advise, or rather entreat, him to relinquish a hope which is unattainable, without a mutual loss of esteem, and, what is still a sadder loss, of self-esteem. We are to see him to-morrow, and I will not close my letter

till our interview has taken place, that I may tell you the result.

The weather is very fine, and Grove-Park is beautiful: — Angelica is delighted. They have no such gardens in Italy as our English ones. I cannot tell you what a happiness it is to me to think that Angelica has found another sister in you.

I knew you would love her; and the more you see of her, the more you will. What a comfort is she to me! especially as you and I cannot but be sometimes separated. I wish as you do, that dear Mrs. Dartford may have the happiness of seeing her her daughter, but I think she is perfectly right in putting her son's constancy to the test. If after some time spent in absence, and by him in the company of other ladies, he remains a loyal knight bound in her chains, she says she will take into consideration, whether she may promise to give him her hand in the course of the next seven years.

Are you in the secret, my dear Caroline, of the improvement which has been made at Grove-Park? I suppose so. But is it setting me a good example to keep

me in the dark? You meant that I should be agreeably surprised. The motive was good, so I do not love you the less. It is indeed a great improvement, and certainly had become an indispensible one. The ground where the arbour stood is so completely transformed, that it is impossible to trace the spot on which that unhappy monument was erected. It is like enchantment. I agree with my father that he could not refuse Sir Francis's request to make the alteration.

I have seen Sir Francis, my dear Caroline, but nothing to the point has passed. His visit was to my father, at least he said so; but my father has told me that the fact is, he was too agitated, and begged not to be left alone with me. You know how expressive his countenance is, —I read his heart there. I am sure he was overpowered by the reflection of being with us for the first time after our perusal of his manuscript, and I am conscious that my painful feelings did not allow me to give him any assistance. I thought his looks reproached me with

cruelty. He said his next visit should be to me, and he hoped to-morrow. I will not detain my letter — I will write again. — Our united love to you and George. — Kiss little Caroline for us.

Your truly affectionate cousin,

AUGUSTA SAVILLE.

## LETTER LXXXII.

*Sir Francis Darrell to Mr. Vernon.*

Belmont, April.

I HAVE at length seen her once more, and since the communication of my story. I went over to Grove-Park resolved to see her alone, and use all my powers of argument and entreaty to prevail, at least so far as to take time to consider the only point on which my happiness depended. Her religious opinions I had previously implicitly conceded to her. But before I arrived at the house, recollecting the day which we had there passed in the autumn, the interview in the bower, her having perused the memorial which had lain there concealed for years, I felt myself completely unmanned — I trembled as I alighted — I could not bear to fix my eyes upon her. — I clung to Saville lest he should leave me, and, unable to

recover myself, I begged permission to see her to-morrow, which was granted with a forced smile, in which lurked any thing but joy and happiness. I see she pities me — I even fancy she is sorry that she cannot love me. — I am no longer her preserver. — I fear I am the destroyer of her peace. When I have seen her again I will write to you if I can.

Your affectionate friend,

F. DARRELL.

## LETTER LXXXIII.

*Caroline to Augusta.*

Woodlee, April.

I THANK you, my dear cousin, for your charming letter. I wanted no proof of the ingenuousness of your mind, when I desired you to open your whole heart to me. The expression arose from my reflecting that you were going to decide the fate of a man, in whom we all take so great an interest, and to whom you cannot but be greatly attached. Poor fellow! how I feel for him! What a noble mind has been lost for years! for nearly ten, I believe; from the time he was seventeen years old — owing to events, awful undoubtedly, but such as George says ought to be forgotten. All that fairly can be laid to his charge, however deplorable, is not to be wondered at in the situation in which he was placed,

and his sufferings since are but a proof of his exquisite sensibility: and whatever life may have been attributed to him, or, in fact, he may have led, of one thing he spurns the accusation — that of corrupting our sex; and George assures me, that he believes he has never been the cause of unhappiness to any man. Amiable young man! My heart bleeds for you; and, could I decide, my charming Augusta should be your prize and compensation. To think, my dear Augusta, that the healing of his wounded spirit should at last depend upon one so circumstanced, that he must be left at six-and-twenty to the melancholy reflection, that Providence has deserted him in this life, and that the remainder of his must be passed unblest, uncomforted! Well! I will not say a word against your religion; but can it require, after such sufferings and repentance, after such acknowledged virtues, and a heart devoted to you, that you should doom him to a long life of misery? For is not unrequited love, misery? But I have done, my sweet cousin. I will plead his cause

no more, though I must share his disappointment.

Woodlee is full. — You ought to have been with us: — you are enquired for and missed. Lady Mount-Vernon loves you and talks of you daily — her Lord and Lady Bab have no objection to you; and I think Mrs. Dartford rivals Lady Mount-Vernon in your praises. Mr. Vernon and Mr. Dartford are also here, and to these you may add Mr., Mrs. and Miss Dorrington. I have a great secret for you. — Mr. Vernon has lost his heart; and Miss Dorrington has gained it · — she is a very sweet girl — and I will say he is a very amiable and excellent young man. — I once trembled for him — I thought he stood upon a precipice: — he has fully regained my esteem, and I will do every thing in my power to promote his happiness with Miss Dorrington. I am pleased with Mr. Dartford; but pray tell Angelica that he talks to me a little too much of her, which she will allow is very ungallant.

I was let into the secret of the alteration at Grove Park, on condition of pre-

serving it, that you might have the unexpected pleasure of seeing the improvement before you heard of it. — At the request of my uncle and George, those melancholy memorials are destroyed; and Sir Francis — but I will not resume the topic — I have not time at present. God bless you, my dear Augusta; say all that is kind to my uncle and Angelica — and when you see Miss Craven remember me to her.

Your most affectionate

CAROLINE GODFREY.

P. S. Your little Caroline sends kisses for you all.

## LETTER LXXXIV.

*Mr. Vernon to Sir Francis Darrell.*

Woodlee. April.

MY DEAR DARRELL,

I CONCEIVE your agitation, and your trembling — I too have some novel agitation, but I do not tremble either for you or myself. Your Augusta's heart is not stone: — do not despond, even if she holds out during the recess — be assured she will not hold out much longer. — Keep up your spirits, and resolve to come to town after her. Mrs. Godfrey is your staunch ally, so is Godfrey. Her father wishes your cause well — and all the force she brings against this is that you are not a Roman Catholic. Where is there any cause for despair? I wish both you and she were here, among people that love you both!

The Godfreys have assembled a delightful party to spend a fortnight here.—There are my mother and sister, with Lady Barbara, John Dartford and his mother, and Mr. Dorrington's family.—Rufus attempted to join us, but he has completely ousted himself.—He has lately been uniting sin and religion so barefacedly, that even I am astounded.—Since our arrival, he has ogled Mrs. Godfrey with such plain transfusions, that she took him to task; and he has this day been summoned before a magistrate at Alton by his virtuous cook, Mrs. Martha, who last year lent her petticoat to Venus. He comes no more here, and I think you have had enough of him; so let him go.

There is a pretty girl here, Darrell, who has *smitten* me.—I know this intelligence will please you. She is not only pretty, but lively, and likes my humour. She would just be the thing for me, if she had a fortune, and that her father is able to give her, and a plum too.—Seriously, though I think fortune a necessary consideration in matrimony, I would as soon go

to *La Trappe*, as marry a woman for her money. Well! and the lady's name? Emily Dorrington. — She is very young — just turned of sixteen, but her father and mother are kind and reasonable people, and I shall not object to taking her as many months under seventeen as they please. I shall leave off writing to go and play billiards with her; I am teaching her, and you don't know how she likes to be taught.

You take no notice, but I don't wonder at it, of Miss Saville's friend Signorina Pisani — she is a charming girl — I hope she will not prove your enemy. — And pray do you know any thing of Olivastro? I have lost sight of him — he spoke warmly of you, but altogether he is a gloomy creature.

Ever yours,

L. VERNON.

## LETTER LXXXV.

*Augusta to Caroline.*

Grove-Park. April.

MY DEAR, DEAR CAROLINE.

You should support me instead of employing all your power against me. How could I withstand such a letter as yours, were it not for the influence of the principle that sustains me? I have told you, my dearest cousin, that my heart is not obdurate. Think you *my* heart does not bleed for him too? I have too much to combat against, and here now has Angelica, on whom I so much depended for assistance, deserted me, and become as strong an advocate as yourself for Sir Francis Darrell. — She talks of the power of a dispensation, as if it were not principally on our consciousness of right and wrong that we should act. — What power

on earth can dispense with our attention to that?

I have again seen him, Caroline; he has pleaded with all the eloquence he is master of, and he has left my heart bleeding. You see I open the whole of it to you. When he came this morning, he was still too agitated to undertake the cause he came to plead, and I hoped to make him more tranquil, by leaving him a short time alone with Angelica. My father was purposely absent; and, when Angelica was about to quit the room, I requested her to stay till I returned, trusting that she would employ the time in preparing his mind for the necessary decision I was about to declare to him. On my return, I found him agitated, but by a different cause; joy sparkled in his eye — he exclaimed:

"I have found a friend — Oh such a friend! speak, Madam, speak for me, I beseech you."

In a quarter of an hour he had so completely gained Angelica's good wishes, that she had furnished him with arguments, and had absolutely advised him

to urge the dispensing power of the Pope.

"It is true," said I, "that many Catholics have recourse to such a power, but is not there a God in every body's breast, which says that duty cannot be dispensed with?"

"My love," said Angelica, "are you a Catholic?"

I blushed at what I had said — Sir Francis eyed me as if he meant to penetrate into my very soul. He said diffidently, and slowly, because he was aware that his observation encroached upon the promise he had given me, "Is not such a power inherent in the Pope?"

"I presume," replied I, blushing still more deeply, "that he possesses such a power."

"It is one I do not wish to deny," cried he, "on the contrary, it is my utmost wish to submit to it. Think, I beseech you, think of it. I ask but the privileges of your own communion.— Shall I not always respect and revere that power which from the most miserable of men shall make me the happiest?"

"Sir Francis," replied I, "I presume not to encounter in reasoning the powers of your understanding; but there is a something within my breast which informs me that a woman acts essentially wrong, who maintains different principles from a man whom she is bound to obey. That something is consciousness; it is the God I alluded to; and I trust it is not impious to call it so, as I imagine the Almighty acts in that manner upon his creatures."

"Will you not be displeased with me," said he, "if I say that your God in the breast influences you on a point most unfortunate for me, when the Pope's power would be in my favour?"

"I confess," replied I, "that between you and Angelica, you have bewildered my thoughts, and I shall now beg the favour of you to give me a little time to recover them. Will you allow the subject to drop at present, and I will renew it to-morrow, if you please?"

"I obey," said he, "but for your consideration at the same time, will you per-

mit me to add one argument which appears to me very strong."

I bowed.

"Though you differ," continued he, "on the same principles, with your father and your cousins, yet you live with them in harmony and love."

This observation was very striking, and I did not attempt to answer it at the moment, but it was agreed that we should resume the subject to-morrow.—Angelica did not leave us—we went into the garden, and, after conversing for some time, particularly with her, he took leave, appointing to meet us at a spot in the garden, which you may remember by the long bench on the lawn, screened from the house by a small grove of lilacs.

I was extremely surprised at Angelica's conduct, and expostulated with her on it. She replied, "that she had been considering all the circumstances respecting Sir Francis, and though she could have wished him of our communion, she really could not think, upon reflection, that I should do wrong in availing

myself of a dispensation. When I observed to her that there was an extraordinary change in her mind, she said that she had not made a proper estimate of the value of such a man; and that she was not without hope of his uniting himself through me to the Church of Rome. Angelica has certainly been fascinated either by him or by you. —But what I did not yield to you, I cannot yield to her; and, after some examination of my own mind, I have resolved to adhere to my principle.

Your secret respecting Mr. Vernon has given me very great pleasure indeed; he has always been a great favourite of mine: — he has a disposition formed to be happy, and most truly do I wish him so. At another time I could have enjoyed the company now with you at Woodlee: — in the present state of my mind I can enjoy nothing; my duty and my feelings are at war, but indeed Caroline the former must conquer.

You see how completely open my heart is to you. To-morrow I decide my own lot for life: — Sir Francis, pos-

sessed as he is of such great delicacy, will no doubt leave this neighbourhood for some time, in which case I will enjoy here some weeks of solitude with my dear Angelica, who, in spite of this amiable desertion of hers, is a real comfort to my heart, and not the less so, Caroline, that she is Sir Francis Darrell's friend. Should he, contrary to my expectation, persist in his suit, and remain at Belmont, I shall beg my father to send us to Hanover Square, where, if so, you will join us in the course of next week.

Adieu, my dearest cousin: — I own I have a heavy heart, but it is a resolute one on occasions like the present; — to-morrow — I hope he will not feel it too much, — but to-morrow he must be answered.

Your truly affectionate cousin,

AUGUSTA SAVILLE.

## LETTER LXXXVI.

*Mr. Saville to Mr. Godfrey.*

(By Express.)

HASTEN to me I beseech you, George, and bring Caroline immediately to Augusta. How shall I tell you what has happened? Darrell is assassinated: he is here, and the surgeon and the physician from Peterborough, who have examined his wound, are of opinion it is mortal. I have sent express to London for Geach. Call in your way, and bring him if he has not already left town, and any other skilful surgeon. If he lives through the day I shall hope that he is not mortally wounded. The assassin is Olivastro, who has put an end to his own existence also. — Wretched man! he is gone to answer for the crime. Augusta

raves, and calls upon Darrell, as if she were his murderer—and as if she were his wife. It is impossible for me to tell you any more at present:—we are all in a state of distraction.

GILBERT SAVILLE.

## LETTER LXXXVII.

*Mr. Vernon to Mr. Godfrey.*

(By Express.)

Grove-Park. April.

MY DEAR GODFREY,

After travelling all night, I am this moment arrived. Darrell is still alive: — neither Geach nor Haverthwait can give a decided opinion: — he has come to himself once; they say he will again, but he suffers excruciating pain. By some movement of Darrell's, the villain missed his heart, and the poignard took a direction in which it has probably passed without touching the vital parts: — this is not very sure, but it appears that the greatest fear is from the inflammation which has taken place. On read-

ing your letter, your uncle thinks you have done right in concealing this horrible event from Mrs. Godfrey for the present. I can give you no detail of it; indeed I can collect none, nor can attempt to get any. I cannot tell you how I am shocked at the sight of my friend; and your cousin is, if possible, in a worse state: — Miss Pisani, with rather more presence of mind, never leaves her. Mr. Saville walks distractedly about; now in the room where Darrell lies; now in the chamber where his daughter sits in distracted silence, or raves for Darrell. She repeats often to herself: —

"I will never believe it, I will never believe it: — give him to me; he is mine."

She has not been in bed since the event. The physician from Peterborough has ordered a medicine to compose her to sleep: — God grant it may recall her senses.

I will dispatch another express to-morrow: — let your servant be upon the watch to prevent Mrs. Godfrey hearing any thing. Olivastro's body is re-

moved to the public-house, and an inquest is to be held upon it to-morrow. I fear Miss Pisani will be compelled to appear as a witness, as she was upon the spot when the assassin appeared. She says, if she could but see her sister restored to her recollection, she should not mind going to give her evidence.

The man is ready : — I will, if I can, write a few lines by the post to say, that the business Darrell wanted me upon will detain me some time : — this will satisfy Mrs. Godfrey as to my abrupt departure and absence, when I was engaged to spend the whole recess at Woodlee.

Yours ever,

L. VERNON.

Monday.

## LETTER LXXXVIII.

*Mr. Vernon to Mr. Godfrey.*

I TREMBLE lest by accident Mrs. Godfrey should become acquainted with the contents of the expresses I dispatch. This has been a dreadful day: — I thought my heart was firmer than I find it. I know not how I shall support myself. I expect this will be the last of Darrell's days on earth. He came to himself this morning; and the scenes I have witnessed have so overcome me, that I do not think I can relate them to you; — but I will try while he remains in another stupor brought on by the medicine which has been given to mitigate the agony of sensation.

I fear I shall confuse the account: — I will begin by speaking of your cousin. The physician said he hoped she would

wake composed, and in her senses, and requested that her father might not be with her at the time, or any appearance of distress be shown. Care was therefore taken to prevent it; but through the night her friend watched by her bed-side. It happened as the doctor foresaw: — when she moved, Miss Pisani, as directed, spoke to her, and asked why she had slept so long: — she did not immediately understand, but closed her eyes in heaviness. In a short time she spoke, and asked Miss Pisani why she had come into her chamber.

"To enquire," said she, "why you sleep so long."

"Good God! Angelica," said she, "have I been dreaming? I still tremble all over: — it cannot be," continued she, coming more to her recollection — "it cannot have been a dream. — Is Sir Francis Darrell in the house?"

Miss Pisani, endeavouring to favour the notion of a dream, said:

"What are you talking of? You are not awake yet — it is too early to expect him."

"Angelica," replied she, "my head is confused, but this cannot have been a dream—no, no; I saw him murdered."

Fortunately her imagination took a different turn, and, instead of wildness, produced a flood of tears. She then seized her friend's hand, and implored her to tell her if Darrell was alive.

Finding the impossibility of persuading her that it was a dream, Miss Pisani thought it best to say,

"Compose yourself, and I will tell you that he is alive."

"But is it true?" cried she.

"It is indeed," replied her friend.

"Oh! say upon your honour that it is true."

"It is, upon my honour."

"Where is he?"

"I have said enough," answered her comforter, "to satisfy you for the present, and you owe it to me to moderate your feelings. Sir Francis is in the house, and, if he hears of your agitation, it may be of very serious consequence to him."

Here, Miss Pisani says, she clasped her hands, directed her eyes to heaven, as if praying, then burst again into tears, and hid her face on her pillow.

While Miss Pisani was thus occupied with your cousin, I was at Darrell's bedside wretched and hopeless. The surgeons would not say that his wound was mortal, but on the other hand, when I pressed for their candid opinion, they acknowledged their fears — if he lasted through this day, and the pain subsided by degrees, there would then be a hope.

It was about ten o'clock when he came to himself, but in pain. He knew me, pressed my hand, and writhing with agony, said:

"Vernon, where is she?"

I told him that the doctors had relieved her agitation by medicines, and that she was at present in bed, where her friend was paying her attention.

"Vernon," said he, "I could have met death better two days ago, but to be cut off at the moment when hope began to spread its charm upon my heart — I fear I loved her too much; — I

thought but of her. Oh! it was idolatry: — my punishment is just: — I must die, my dear Vernon; — will not that be sufficient expiation? And may I not, without aggravation of my error, ask to see her once more?"

I begged him to call all his fortitude to his assistance in the trial that awaited him in such a case. "But, Darrell," added I, "the surgeons have not pronounced the wound mortal."

"Do not," replied he, "try to flatter yourself or me; and, indeed, were there the slightest hope, this longing of my heart to see her once more would destroy it, if it is determined that we are not to meet again."

"No," said Saville, who had come into the room and heard the latter part of our conversation — "no such determination is made: — you *shall* see her, and I trust in God you will live to make her happy."

Overcome with tenderness, he put out his hand to your uncle, who went close to him, when he placed his arm about his neck and wept without speaking. A

short silence took place: — he then desired the surgeons might be called to him. He shook hands with them, and begged them to tell him truly how long they thought he had to live. They said that they could not answer him, for they had not even despaired of his life.

"Be candid," said he, "I care not for death, but I want a little time: — you know me to be in immediate danger?"

"So much," said Haverthwait, "that I advise you not to delay the settlement of your affairs; in other respects I would have you hope."

"I thank you," said he; "that is enough. I have no affairs to settle, and my will is already made."

They now examined the state of his wound, and dressed it. He writhed a good deal, but bore it well.

During this operation Mr. Saville had gone out, and, as I afterwards learned from him, for the purpose of preparing your cousin to see Darrell. He found her composed beyond his expectation, and sitting at a table writing. Your uncle, without dissembling the danger, endeavoured to lessen the fear of it.

When he mentioned Darrell's desire, she suddenly rose, as if to comply immediately; but, hearing that the surgeons were with him, she sat down again. How will you be surprized to hear, that she now proposed to her father to become Darrell's wife immediately! Lovely, angelic woman! But this is no time to indulge in raptures. To enable you to understand this unexpected change in her resolution, I must give you some previous information, which I have learned from your uncle and Miss Pisani.

Firmly resolved as she has been to let no worldly temptation interfere with her religion, her mind has nevertheless been agitated on the subject for some time past, without the slightest reference to Darrell, though it is very extraordinary that he was, unknown to her, the original cause of the reflections which created that agitation. You will remember at the masquerade a mask in the dress of a monk. It was Darrell, who, in a humorous manner, laid open to her the absurdity of thinking all her friends doomed to eternal misery, for no other reason,

but because they were not Roman Catholics. The absurdity had, in a certain degree, molested her peace ever since; but she thought it her duty not to reason on the point, and she had completely made up her mind not to marry a Protestant. You know she came down to Grove Park with a resolution not to accept of Darrell; but it so happened that Miss Pisani, who was much pleased with him, advised her to have recourse to a dispensation. This again proved its own absurdity. She took time to consider of it, and the issue was that she resolved not to put her own understanding in competition with what she esteemed the wisdom of ages; and she went with her friend to meet Darrell at an appointed place in the garden.

They were standing together near some lilacs, when a scream from Miss Pisani made Darrell turn, at the very moment the villain aimed his blow. His blood gushed out — he fell, crying out:

"Oh! Augusta, my Augusta! Say that my soul is not eternally lost."

"I will never believe it lost," cried

she, and fainted. Miss Pisani's cries brought assistance, and they were both conveyed senseless into the house. Since then she has, as I told you, perpetually repeated in her raving, that she *would never believe it.* On her recovering her senses this morning, and ascertaining Darrell's danger, she dressed herself, and passed some time with considerable calmness in meditating and writing. She was still so occupied, when her father went to her. She informed him of the state of her mind, and gave her reasons for abjuring the Roman faith altogether, concluding with the proposal I have mentioned. As I never leave Darrell, I was with him when Mr. Saville returned. He held a paper in his hand; " Darrell," said he, " I have brought what will, I trust, do more in healing your wound, than the most consummate skill: — my friend, Augusta is yours."

" Oh!" cried Darrell, " it is too much. You make me a coward: you make me dread death."

Here your uncle put the paper into my hand to read out. It was addressed to

Darrell, and the contents are what I shall now copy:

"With much effort, my truly loved friend, I have raised my mind to a degree of composure and strength, which enables me to address you, and to assure you, that, in life or death, I am resolved to be yours. But in declaring this, let me not lose your esteem. I have not been swayed by earthly considerations. I love you, indeed, more than I can express, and I have loved you longer than I have been myself aware of; yet, great as I know my affection to be, never would it have prevailed with me to abandon the duty I owe to God. I abjure my former opinions, not because I love you, but because, on reflection, I think those opinions attributed to the Almighty a WILL that cannot be his. Shall *your* soul be lost for ever, after what it has accomplished? I would sooner believe virtue a mockery, and the evil Spirit the supreme Power. This is enough for me, but there are also other points, which now appear to me inconsistent with God's

goodness. I cannot dwell upon them. I said, I would never be the wife of a man, with whom I differed in religious principles. If you live — how I have prayed for your being spared to me, God knows — I will place myself under your guidance, in the pursuit of true religion. I am sure you will lead me right; but, if I have the misfortune to lose you, I will take the instruction of enlightened men; I will learn of my father, my cousin, and of our good Bishop. There may be, there are I am sure, some excellent principles in the Roman Catholic faith, but my attachment to the whole has led me into a fatal error, one that prevented my being yours in time to avert the horror of this moment. I therefore abjure it entirely, and will adopt that which you will lead me to. And now let me tell you that I consider myself as your wife, and that the only comfort I can have is to be permitted to perform the duties of a wife in attendance upon you. If the Almighty grant my prayer, love and duty shall combine to make you happy through life; if it is his will to deny it,

I will support myself in thinking of you as long as I live, in the hope of meeting you when I die. My father says you have asked to see me. You have but to send for me; I will not lose a moment in flying to your arms."

Imagine, my dear Godfrey, the sensation produced by this affecting letter from the effect it has upon yourself. It was too much for Darrell; he seized my hand, and rested his head upon it for some time, without speaking; then raising it with a shudder, he said,

"I will not be impious. God forgive me! but since I must die, bring her to me, and let me die in her arms."

Her father went for her; she advanced, at first composed, but, as she approached him, she trembled: he raised himself, and, taking her into his arms, exclaimed, "My wife!" She said, "My husband!" Saville and I separated them, warning her of the effects of agitation, on which she resumed her fortitude, and requested permission to stay.

"Is it not possible," said Darrell,

anxiously to her father, " Is it not possible, my dear Mr. Saville, to make her now legally my wife?"

Your uncle looked at me for an opinion. I said to your cousin,

" What does Miss Saville say?"

" That it is the first wish of my heart," replied she.

It happened that the clergyman of the parish was coming by appointment to administer the sacrament, and it was resolved to consult him. In the meantime Geach and Haverthwaite interfered, and said, that all agitation was very imprudent. She herself proposed to leave the room, that she might reflect, and prepare herself to take the sacrament with him. She was requested to go without taking leave. He followed her with his eyes, and with a smile that defied pain and death. She turned twice to look at him, and at the door she prayed.

The clergyman soon arrived, and said he required a special licence to perform the ceremony, and that as Miss Saville was not yet of age, Mr. Saville's presence would be necessary for obtaining it.

Darrell was silent, but his look supplicated, and your uncle is now going off in a chaise with four horses, meaning to travel all night, with a hope of being back to-morrow evening. Instead of an express, as I intended, I shall send this by him to be forwarded from London. I will continue what I have yet to relate in another letter, which shall be dispatched on the return of Mr. Saville.

Ever yours,

L. VERNON.

Tuesday.

## LETTER LXXXIX.

*Mr. Vernon to Mr. Godfrey.*

(By Express.)

Wednesday.

Darrell continues suffering; there is no alteration for the better, but I may also say that there is nothing more threatening. I will continue the subject of yesterday, and I have a very surprising story to tell you, which came out before the coroner; but I must first say a few words of Darrell and his Augusta.

While the clergyman was preparing for the communion service, Miss Saville asked if she might be admitted. She went forward to him, and gave him her hand, which he kissed. "I have been thinking," said she to him, "of confession. It is one of the sacraments of the church of Rome. At Signa I had an excellent

man for a confessor: his instructions were all calculated to produce piety and virtue, and he was by no means rigid. I shall always venerate and love him. Such a friend is an honour in any religion, and a great comfort to those who need one; but few confessors are like him, and the manner in which confession is made among the lower classes of people justifies, perhaps, the ridicule that is often thrown upon it: as for me, I am convinced, that the general confession of the heart to its Maker is the genuine principle of religion. The minister may absolve, but the confession should be to God. I have been communing with my own heart, and I am prepared to take the sacrament with you as your betrothed wife."

He still held her hand, which he again kissed, but I saw he was suffering acutely, and I advised an immediate attention to the ceremony. I have not words to express my admiration of your cousin. They both, with unaffected piety, received the sacrament. When it was over, she went and took his hand, and, observing

perspiration on his brow, wiped it away with her handkerchief. He was now so agonized, that the doctors thought it proper to procure relief by stupor, and they accordingly gave him a medicine that would produce it.

I have now to relate what, in point of time, preceded the circumstances of which I have given you an account. Providence, sooner or later, overtakes the guilty. I told you, that an inquest was to be held at the public-house on Olivastro's body. The day before yesterday, after I had dispatched my express, we were surprised at the appearance of officers of justice, who came to arrest your cousin's maid. They asked to speak with Mr. Saville, and told him that the Italian woman was implicated in the murder. Madelena was called and questioned by Mr. Saville as to her knowledge of Olivastro being in the neighbourhood. She denied any communication with him, and Mr. Saville would have answered for her appearance, but the officers could not consent to it, and she was taken into custody.

The inquest was held the next morning, yesterday at nine o'clock; at which hour your uncle went to the public-house with Miss Pisani to state the circumstances that took place at Grove Park, and to release Madelena. But guess their astonishment, when a letter was produced in Italian, written in her hand, though not subscribed by her, informing Olivastro of Darrell's appointment with Miss Saville. She did not know the letter was in the coroner's possession till it was produced; the effect the sight of it had upon her was enough to convict her of guilt. She turned as pale as death; looked confounded, and could say nothing in reply to the questions put to her. At last she said, that if Mr. Saville would be her friend, and obtain her pardon, she would speak, and make discoveries that would astonish him. She was told, that a true and full confession of all she knew was the only way to obtain mercy, and that interest would be made for her according to her conduct at present. Upon this she made the following extraordinary disclosure:

"That it was through the means of the Count d'Olivastro she had been placed in the service of Miss Saville: that she was in the pay of the Count, who, being in love with her mistress, exacted of her a minute account of all her actions, her lovers, and her friends: that he occasionally made her presents when she gave him any particular information which he was anxious to have: that she had given him notice of her departure from Florence for Paris: — that he employed her in conjunction with persons of the name of Gaza to assist him in carrying her mistress away from Paris, meaning to take her into Germany, and to marry her with or without her consent by means of bribery; hoping, that, finding she could not do otherwise, she would consent to live with him as his wife: that the plan was laid at Gaza's house in Paris: that to prevent the Gazas from being suspected, her mistress was not to be pressed to take any refreshment at their house, but that she (the maid) was to find an opportunity of giving her mistress some *bonbons*, in which

was mixed up the drug that was to cause sleep — that she gave them to her mistress as they were going to Gaza's, when she stopped at a confectioner's to buy *bonbons* for Gaza's children; that she prevailed upon her to eat enough on the way; — that Gaza's wife was upon her guard, and substituted other *bonbons* for the children; — that Gaza had calculated the time of the drug's producing its effect, and that his wife had contrived to detain her mistress till that was nearly taking place, when Gaza and two of his friends followed her: that, when her mistress had passed through the garden of the Tuilleries, they put her falling asleep into a carriage; and, having taken the necessary means, carried her out of Paris towards Poissy, where they were to meet Count d'Olivastro: that, as for herself, she staid all night at Gaza's, and went back to Mr. Saville's hotel the next morning, with a pretended story, which was credited: that Gaza and his two friends placed her mistress asleep in what they thought a safe place, under the care of a woman, and went on to Poissy to

refresh themselves, and receive further instructions from the Count: that the woman knowing Miss Saville would not wake for some time, and the cottage being in an out-of-the-way place, had gone upon some errand of her own: — that the person whom Sir Francis had shot was Olivastro himself in disguise: that he fled immediately for fear of the police, and that Gaza and his friends returned to Paris, and were never suspected: that on Count d'Olivastro's coming to England, he again engaged her to assist him in any plan he might adopt: — that she had given him a description of Grove-Park: that he had reconnoitred both that and Belmont, but that he had never been able to form any new plan to carry off her mistress: that she knew he was in the neighbourhood, and had promised to inform him when Sir Francis came to see her mistress, but that she did not know that his intention was to assassinate him."

Such is the confession of this wretched young woman, whom gain has tempted to all this wickedness. She is committed

to prison. It is clear to me that Olivastro intended some new act of violence, but had not long premeditated the one he executed, which seems to have been the immediate effect of jealousy. It being impossible to keep these circumstances from your cousin, Miss Pisani made her acquainted with them, but they produced little effect upon her, her whole mind being absorbed in the danger of Darrell. She never quits him. The man is ready —I will not wait for Mr. Saville's return.

Ever yours,

L. VERNON.

## LETTER XC.

*Mr. Vernon to Mr. Godfrey.*

(By Express.)

Thursday.

What a painful task is mine, my dear Godfrey! But, having undertaken it, I will go through with it. Your cousin is Lady Darrell, but I fear I must add — Oh God! Oh God! I am in the room with them — but whether he be alive or dead I know not. I have left his couch —he is in her arms — her father standing by. — Haverthwait is seeking for a pulse in vain — I cannot write.

* * * * * *

It lasts long, if it be but a swoon, as they think. I have come out of the room

to write, that my letter may be ready for the express. My heart is so heavy, and my head so bewildered, that I know not how to relate what has passed. I will do what I can, but the task is indeed dreadful.

Darrell remained long in an insensible doze. — When he opened his eyes he saw Miss Saville at his bedside; — he smiled, and said —"I shall not die, while an angel watches my life." To her enquiries he replied that he was not in such great pain as he had been, but that he was faint. The surgeons were called in, and they requested earnestly that he might be kept quiet. It was time to examine and dress the wound, and your cousin joined her friend, Miss Pisani, who is, as you may well imagine, in a very unhappy state. You know how amiable she is. Her attachment to Miss Saville is completely that of a sister.

Your uncle was very fortunate in getting to town in time to procure the license the very next morning; but with all his expedition, and he took no sleep but in the chaise, he did not arrive here

till after midnight. Darrell was dozing; his destined bride also, by a little artifice in which Miss Pisani assisted, was asleep. The surgeons had said there was no change that indicated immediate danger. Thus circumstanced, I compelled Mr. Saville to go to bed, promising to call him if Darrell asked for him, and at all events before eight o'clock. I sat up with the nurse, but took some sleep in an easy chair, which has been my only bed since I arrived at Grove-Park.

About seven in the morning Darrell asked if Mr. Saville was returned. On being informed that he was, he said,

"What day is this?"

I told him, Thursday, the sixteenth of April.

He paused a little; then, putting out his hand to me, and pressing mine, he said,

"God bless you, Vernon! This is indeed an April-day — there will be sunshine and rain: I am easier, but I am faint. — Has Mr. Saville the license?"

I said, he had.

"Do not," continued he, "let the ceremony be delayed to a late hour in the morning. The vicar holds himself in readiness."

"Shall it be immediately?" said I.

"Saville needs rest," replied he:— "but not later than nine o'clock — I grow fainter and fainter every hour."

I promised to pay attention to his wish, and he resumed his silence. I immediately dispatched a note to the vicar, appointing him to be with us at half-past eight; and I sent for the housekeeper from Belmont to be present. At eight I called your uncle myself. The surgeons attended to the wound, and, for the first time, said that it had a favourable appearance, all inflammation having subsided. But Darrell shook his head. When they had finished, he begged to be moved in his morning-gown to a large couch that stood in the room, and wished that the chamber might be aired. It was allowed to be done according to his desire. He was gently removed, and suffered less than I expected. His man, Morris, managed it with great tenderness. The

bed was made, and the chamber put in order for the ceremony that was about to take place.

At the time appointed the vicar came. Mr. Saville received him, and presented the licence. The surgeons were invited to witness the ceremony; Morris and the housekeeper were desired to attend; the nurse took her station with them. A little before nine the vicar entered the room, followed by your cousin, her friend, and Mr. Saville. So melancholy a bride, or so mournful a marriage, was never known before; yet both bride and bridegroom seemed to have determined that the mourning should be inward. She wore a loose simple cambric robe, gathered at her waist by a white ribbon; he was wrapped in a silk gown:—the morning was fine, and a gentle light was admitted into the room. The vicar performed his duty—it was a most affecting ceremony;—not an eye in the chamber but was filled with tears, except those of the bride and bridegroom:—they looked at each other seriously, but as if they thought they were leaving this world behind

them. As the clergyman was concluding, Darrell's countenance underwent a change — his wife turned and clasped him to her bosom — he feebly put his arms about her neck, and whispered, "I die happy," and fell back on the couch.

* * * * * *

That the ways of Providence are inscrutable is one of the earliest sayings we learn. As we grow up, most of us take it for granted, and give ourselves no trouble in the scrutiny. The words chance and accident are perpetually in our mouths; and, if we thank God, it is with an habitual lip-phrase. Coincidences and analogous events in moral history, and retributive justice escape our notice, or merely excite our wonder; and Providence, though at our hand, is the last agent we look to for explanation. My mind has been turned to this subject by the correspondence and conversation of my friend for some time past, and we have together taken pleasure in tracing, both in public and private life, the hand

of that Being whom, formerly, we scrupled not to insult, for having limited the boundaries of knowledge. In Darrell's life I trace it everywhere — I cannot trace it in his death. He had expiated — the reasoning of your friend the Bishop of * * was convincing; and, though Darrell's fears and self-disapprobation blinded him, I saw that hand leading him to happiness. In the events of his wife's life, I can also trace it; but I lose it again in her widowhood, and I am obliged to rest in ignorance in this world, looking to another for the clue. Well, my dear Godfrey, I am content to wait, and for this resignation of my pride I am indebted to Darrell.

* * * * * *

He lives, Godfrey! — my friend still lives: — It was but a swoon. Rejoice, rejoice! and you may now proclaim it to Mrs. Godfrey, and to all our friends: — He is preserved to us — he lives to bless and be blest. It *was* but a swoon, the consequence of the low state in

which the doctors have kept him to counteract the effects of inflammation. They have saved him by it, and Providence is again clear to my view. Even in Olivastro's dagger I see his hand:— that dagger has accelerated Darrell's happiness; it has hastened the conviction of his wife's mind, and completed her to his heart's content. I left them folded in each other's arms, and their father weeping over them for joy.—But joy too is dangerous at times, and at the desire of the doctors I must go and counteract it. To you I send it unbounded—Joy, joy to you all! Tell Mrs. Dartford that time is pregnant with merrier weddings, but meanwhile we will soon meet to celebrate the happy marriage of Sir Francis and Lady Darrell!

LEWIS VERNON.

# NOTE.

The Author intended to finish the Novel with the death of Sir Francis, and the moral reflections of Mr. Vernon; and he thinks religious justice, if he may use the expression, would be satisfied; but at the request of a friend, and in obedience to what he believes to be poetical justice, he added the concluding passage.

THE END.

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